

GRIT

Story
Section



A New and
Exciting First-Run
Novel

RECKLESS LADY

By VERA BROWN

Opens in the Story Section
— Today —

It's the Story of an Ultra-Rich
Playgirl who Flaunted All
Laws Until She Was
Spanked by a
Judge



August 8, 1937

Stoddard, without lifting his head, repeated his order: "Call the next case!" Outside in the hallway, waiting for the elevator, Lawton was moaning helplessly: "Karen, you little fool! It was all set! You were to have another chance! You've gone crazy! What in the devil can I tell your father?"

Karen smiled coldly at Lawton, did not seem to hear him.

"I said all I have to say in court!" she told the reporters.

"I'll say she did!" murmured somebody on the edge of the crowd.

"I'll appeal the case, of course," Lawton kept repeating in a kind of helpless way.

"You'll do nothing of the sort!" Karen was equally firm.

"It is worth five days to tell a judge what you think of him!" And she said that loud enough for everybody to hear. Karen was still blazing with anger.

The elevator came and newspaper people crowded on with officers and their "prisoner." "Miss Mallory has nothing more to say," Lawton announced in loud tones.

"What about her big birthday party scheduled the day after tomorrow?" somebody called above the crowd.

"We can't discuss that now."

The car had reached the basement. A police officer was unlocking the door of the bullpen. Suddenly Karen Mallory, who never did anything she did not want to, found herself behind bars.

"Are you going to take her in the police patrol?" a reporter asked the police officer.

"What the devil do you think we'd take her in?" demanded a cop. A limousine? Say, she's no better than anybody else when she gets in here!"

Karen was still so furious she did not trust herself. Walking as far as she could, she turned her back on the crowd peering in through the bars at her.

Then, with a completely defiant gesture, she opened her handbag, took out her compact and powdered her nose with expert care.

A girl convicted of a drunken driving charge sat on a wooden bench watching. "Well, girlie, you don't seem to mind this. Lord, have I got a hang-over?"

Karen, knowing the watchers were pop-eyed, smiled.

"What'd you get?"

"Get?"

"How long you're up for?"

"Oh, five days I think."

"You're lucky; that old sore-head upstairs gave me ten days. He musta got up the wrong side of the bed this morning."

The girl eyed the crowds and Karen speculatively. "You in for drunk driving too?"

"No, just speeding."

"Swell country this is getting to be when a lady goes to jail just like that for nothing!"

Then Karen heard Ping Farrington calling to her. Ping was her fiancé. "Karen, come here," young Farrington demanded. Gingerly Karen went to the bars and tried to hide behind Ping.

"Darling, what is this all about? Where's Lawton?"

Ping clutched Karen's hands through

the bars, and Karen's beautiful engagement ring which Ping had given her three weeks before cut into her finger.

"Now, honey, I'll get you out of this. I know Stoddard. I'll fix everything. I'm going right up there now and see him."

"You'll do nothing of the sort!"

"You can't stay in here."

"Never mind about that—"

"Your mother will be frantic. Wait until your father hears about this!"

"Thank goodness he isn't in town!"

"There's such a thing as radio and they'll burn up the air to get him. You be a good girl and I'll have you out of here in 15 minutes!"

Ping gave her hands a squeeze, and Karen ducked to the back of the cell again.

CHAPTER II

IN STODDARD'S courtroom upstairs the crowds had seeped away. The excitement was over. They stood outside hoping to catch a glimpse of the girl as she went on her way to jail.

Farrington, fumbling for his card, asked one

"She is my fiancée, you know," he continued.

"No. I didn't know—" Oddly enough, Stoddard felt a resentment against this affable young man.

"Of course, she can't stay in jail and I wondered just what you suggest I do."

Stoddard went to his desk and pulled out a sheaf of traffic tickets. "Here they are," he said with a wry smile.

"There's enough to play a game of bridge with. Last week I sent up a woman for five days who did not have as many violations charged up against her as Miss Mallory." He paused.

"But you know, Mallory is pretty powerful," Ping warned. "It would be valuable to have his aid; there's a new campaign coming along in a little while, and this is a nice job for a young chap like you—"

Stoddard was white.

"I realize all that, but there is nothing I can do."

Farrington was angry. "It's so silly; we'll see she doesn't drive for a while."



"I Suppose You're Karen Mallory?"
The Girl's Eyes Glittered, and
Her Hands Were Shaking

But why that child should be sent into an awful jail! It's unthinkable!"

"Probably, but that child is just that, spoiled. I had to do what I did."

Something in the judge's eye told Ping he had gone too far. He changed his method of attack.

"But Karen's a darling, really, and then there's that big birthday party for her. A thousand people invited and it will have to be called off. Lots of publicity for you, I suppose."

"That is what Miss Mallory intended."

"What do you mean?"

"Only that she told me in open court just how much contempt she had for me. It was all I could do to keep from citing her. But I couldn't be drawn into a fight with a woman—certainly not a beautiful one. I'm not that foolish. I know my limitations."

"You don't mean Karen got up on her

of the officers if the judge could see him for a moment. Stoddard, still on the bench, looked at Farrington's card, glanced toward him, and shortly joined Farrington in his private office.

"Do you remember, judge, I think we were in Columbia together? At least I tried my luck at law for a term; we were in 'Negotiable Instruments' together. Right there was where I gave up the idea of law."

"Of course," Stoddard held out his hand. "What can I do for you?"

"I wanted to talk to you about Miss Mallory," Ping began.

"Yes," the judge, instantly watchful, eyed Ping.

high horse in court, do you, judge?" "Something like that. However, I'd have had to sentence her anyway, so that does not matter. It was just—rather amusing."

"She didn't mean it. I'll make her apologize, in open court, and then she can go free."

"I'm afraid it is not as simple as that, Farrington. By the way, did she send you?"

"No, she didn't want me to come." "If I judge the young lady rightly, that is no surprise to me. I'm sorry, Farrington, but there is nothing I can do for you in this case. Maybe next time—" And so ended the interview.

Ping rushed back downstairs to the bullpen. He was too late. Karen had gone. She had gone in a police patrol to jail, lovely Karen Mallory, who had had more proposals of marriage than any other young woman on Manhattan or Long Island for that matter.

For years Karen was to remember that ride to the jail. With her went Violet, the girl who had been driving drunk and two other women who were to serve two-day sentences for traffic violations.

Violet kept a steady moaning all the way. "It's my head, it feels like a whole marimba band! Wonder if they'll let me have a drink in jail?"

The officer riding at the door, foot up on the opposite seat, said he thought not.

Behind them, Karen could see a string of taxis carrying newspapermen and photographers to the jail. "They're still after me," Karen thought, with a smile.

"Say, officer, who's this dame that everybody's getting so excited about her?" demanded one of the women.

"Ask her," said the officer. "All right, what's your name?" The woman leaned toward Karen, who sat opposite her.

"Karen Mallory."

"What! Not that girl that's always getting into the newspapers?" The woman just gasped. Karen did not answer.

"We're in swell company all right," Violet remarked. "Is it true your dad has all the money in the world?"

Karen smiled at Violet. She was refreshing at least! Maybe this might be fun. Only five days, and to the devil with the party! They could put it off.

"What's it like in jail?" Karen asked. "You'll know in a minute," said the officer as the patrol drew up at the receiving door. "Come on, girls, and no fighting! Out with you."

Together the three trooped inside the big gray pile. Under the high lights of the registration room they faced a man in a steel mesh cage.

But where Karen was there was to be no peace. The cameramen had arrived, arrived in time to see Karen pass over to the officer her gorgeous sapphire engagement ring, her watch, and her money.

"Can't I keep some of that?" Karen asked as she counted out the bills from her purse.

"The matron will let you have some as you need it; now keep moving."

Shortly Karen Mallory was standing outside the shower room in a checked

gingham dress. Her blond beauty in that plain garb, with the gray-painted walls as background, was startling.

The matron smiled at her. "This way, Miss Mallory, come along."

"Shall I be in a cell alone?" "I'm afraid not; we're pretty crowded."

"May Violet be with me then?" "Violet?"

"This girl," said Karen, pointing to her friend of the bullpen.

"That can be arranged."

The twist of a dial and the cell door opened. Karen and Violet were at the end of their journey.

Karen, looking around the gray walls, felt a sudden desperation. Her anger had cooled and she felt a desperate desire to cry. As she walked over to her bunk and sat down, she saw that in that cell block were two other girls. They were eying her with deep interest. Even here in jail, the Mallory name was something to conjure with, it appeared. Karen could not realize the grapevine system of news which travels through a jail like quicksilver, travels for those who are so eager for news, any news to break the monotony, to help the time pass more quickly.

"I'm hungry," Karen suddenly remembered. She'd had only coffee for breakfast for Lawton had come for her to hurry her to court.

Karen, disconsolate, wondered about Lawton and her mother.

"Oh, my head!" Violet interposed and she lay down on the gray blanket, which covered her bunk. "If I live through today, maybe I'll be all right."

"Try to sleep," Karen suggested. "I would if they'd keep those hammers quiet."

"Miss Mallory, your attorney has ordered your meals sent in from Pierre's. He says you may want some lunch."

Karen saw the two strange girls straighten up.

"Yes," she came over to Miss Kilroy and spoke in a low tone. "May I order something for the other girls in my cell?"

"No, but if you put in a large order and there is enough for them, nobody can object," the matron said with a smile.

"Fine," Karen turned. "What do you girls want to eat?" They were all silent. "The treat's on me," Karen said, as she noted the hesitation.

"Could we have anything we wanted?" one of them asked.

"Of course."

"I'm from down South, and would I like fried chicken?" she said.

"Right, Violet, what do you want?"

"Never speak to me of food again as long as I live!" came a muffled voice from her bunk.

"Black coffee for you, and you could drink some tomato juice, couldn't you?"

So Karen gave the order. "And tell them to hurry it up."

Hardly had the order been given when the matron came back to get Karen for her first visitor.

"It's your attorney," said Miss Kilroy. Karen was led into the matron's small office off an interviewing room.

"Karen?" It was Ping who met her at the door, took her in his arms and kissed her.

Lawton was pacing up and down the cell. "What a day!" he groaned. "Have you got anything to eat?"

"Oh, yes; Miss Kilroy has sent for something for me." Then to Ping. "Darling, I'm truly sorry. I didn't realize what a mess I'd make of everything."

"Mess is right! Here's some radishes from your dad. He's wild. His ship will dock in the morning. We've got to get you out before then."

"What about Mother?" "You can't imagine. She's frantic. She says we've got to get you out before the party."

"Cancel the thing. I didn't want it anyway."

"How can we? Everything's arranged, and lots of people are coming up from out of town for it!"

"Well, put it off for a couple of days, we'll have a 'coming-out party' for me!"

"Karen, how can you! Think of your mother and dad! I think you're enjoying this."

"Certainly I am!"

"You really hate it!" Ping dropped a kiss on the top of her honey-colored hair. "Karen, you're difficult!"

"Sorry? Want to back out?"

"I'd like to spank you! That's what!"

"I dare you!"

"Will you two keep still? I've got to talk to Karen." Lawton, shocked at seeing Karen in prison garb and now that the first blow was over, became furiously angry with her. Probably this whole thing would cost him his close personal association with Mallory. That meant cutting off the major part of his income. And Lawton had an expensive family.

"Karen, if you'll apologize to the judge I think he'll let you out by tomorrow morning. He's served his purpose."

"That's just the point, my dear, darling Jim! Of course, he's served his purpose."

Her impertinent little nose, her laughing eyes, were incongruous in this place. "That's just what I'm complaining about. He's a silly stuffed shirt that thought he'd get a lot of publicity by sending me to jail. Well, I'm going to see he gets it!"

"Karen!" Lawton pleaded, almost on his knees. "Stoddard is a great guy. He'd have given you a break if you'd behaved in court! You know you had something coming. I almost went to jail myself the last time you got into trouble! Just trying to fix the thing up."

"Now, darling!" Ping was becoming nervous. Karen was carrying the whole thing too far. So they quarreled, Karen with flippancy, Lawton with rising anger. Finally he gave up.

"Karen, I'm going away. Maybe a night in this place will teach you some sense."

"How can you leave her here, Jim?" Ping demanded. "Lord, even the smell

Continued on Page 31

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The RIVER of SKULLS

Continuing an Adventure-Romance of the Northland by **GEORGE MARSH**

THE CHARACTERS AND THE PLOT

YOUNG ALAN CAMERON, his Indian trapping companion, Noel Leleup, and their magnificent dog, Rough, are saved from starvation on the frozen Ungava wastes when they stumble upon the permanent camp of a huge white man who says he is John McCord. Loving with him is his pretty blond daughter, Heather.

Their host takes consistency of the mysterious River of Skulls and asks them to go outside and buy for him dead dogs of the same breed as Rough. When they return to Fort George the young trappers get a warm reception. Alan's heart beats rapidly as he greets beautiful Berthe Desenne, daughter of the Revalon Freres agent.

Desenne's new clerk, the dapper Anselm Rivard, apparently has made no deep impression on Berthe, but Cameron has no time for him, nevertheless. So he is anything but cordial to James McQueen and Tom Skade, introduced to him by Rivard as provincial police seeking to learn the whereabouts of John McCord, whom they charge with the murder of his wife. A woman who says she is Mrs. Hanbury, a special agent of the

government, also seeks to learn where McCord has his camp hidden.

Upon the insistence of McQueen, who carries credentials indicating he is a police officer, Cameron accompanies him and Skade northward, but "shakes" them and makes his way to McCord's camp with the sled dogs. He is welcomed cordially by the big scar-faced man and the beautiful Heather, who makes no secret of the fact that she is overjoyed at again seeing the personable Alan.

Cameron tells of his meeting with McQueen, Skade, and Mrs. Hanbury and their expressed intention of arresting McCord for wife murder. Whereupon the accused gives Alan the true facts in the case. He says Mrs. Hanbury is his wife and that McQueen and Skade are not police officers but former war scavengers intent on securing his secret of rich gold deposits in the far northland. His unfaithful wife is in league with them.

It is from another war buddy, now dead, that John McCord learned of the precious metal along the River of Skulls. He plans with Cameron and Leleup to reach the river and get some of this gold. They may have to take Heather along, for two strange Indians already have frightened her.

CHAPTER XV



NE morning, ten days after the boys had left for the Sinking Lakes, Heather, who had been hard at work gathering a supply of berries for the winter, took her pack bag, in which she carried them, and her rifle and started for the barren above the valley. It was a keen day in late September. The floor of the forest was yellow with the leaves of birch and aspen. Each night the frost whitened the tundra moss and thickened the ice in the small ponds, but the strong running river would not yield and close until the waning of the "Freezing Moon."

Leaving the valley, for an hour she walked across the treeless tundra, gray with caribou moss, like velvet to the feet, and splashed with patches of low growing blueberries, bake-apple, moss and cranberries. But she did not stop until she came to a fold in the barren, a little valley or swale where, shielded from the wind, dwarf spruce, juniper, and deer bush gallantly battled for existence. Here the berries grew in profusion and of larger size than on the open tundra. And here she flushed a family of willow ptarmigan already in their white plumage who flipped their tails as usually as they lifted and sailed away with a loud "kr-r-r-r!"

Heather had almost filled her bag and was seated, eating her lunch of bannock sandwiches, when her eyes caught something black moving in the low scrub hundred yards away.

"It must be—it must be a bear!" she exclaimed, reaching for her gun. Her heart pounded with excitement. She had seen bears before but never had she shot one. And here was the chance to add much needed meat and grease to their store of winter provisions.

On hands and knees she started to crawl toward the bear feeding on berries a short rifle-shot away. She did not dare risk a shot until she had a better view of him, so worked her way cautiously through thick growths of Labrador tea, laurel, and spagnum moss. At last, she lay where she had a clear view of the feeding animal. Sprawled in a clump of blueberries, with both paws he drew the low bushes greedily to his mouth, stripping them of their fruit.

Excited though she was, she shook with muffled laughter at the juice-smeard muzzle of the huge beast, then suddenly sobered. From his size he must be a barren-ground bear, larger than the black bear and, according to Noel, often dangerous. Suppose she missed and he charged her? He would tear her to ribbons, to be helpless while her father waited for her return. She would have to hold true. There was no one to help her now.

With her heart beating in her throat Heather attempted to draw a bead on the black shoulder of the beast hardly 50 yards away. But her sights wavered—would not hold true. She must wait—get her nerves under control. She felt herself growing cold—cold with the fear that she would miss.

Then with an effort she calmed her jumping nerves. What would Alan—her father, think of her if they knew? Alan must never know she had been afraid. Her white teeth clamped hard as she again aimed at the feeding bear. The swaying sights on the rifle steadied. For an instant the bead of the muzzle sight held in the rear notch and she squeezed the trigger.

With a roar the bear reared on his hind legs searching for his hidden enemy then dropped, biting savagely at his side. She had missed the vital spot! She must not miss again! Then, before she could aim, the bear saw her.

Believing his rage, he came lunging through the low scrub at the terrified girl. She leaped to her feet and started to run. But the low bushes caught a moccasin and she fell headlong. On came the wounded beast, until but a few yards separated them. Heather, twisting around, still holding her gun,

aimed as he came and fired point-blank into his chest. Scrambling to one side, she pumped another shell into the chamber as the stricken beast crumpled in the blueberry heath.

"I've got him! I've got him!" she cried, weak from excitement, as she stood with cocked rifle. Knees shaking under her she watched the hulking body sprawled in the bushes. The second shot had gone home. The bear was shot through the heart.

Trembling from fright and strain of the last few moments, she gazed in awe at the great yellow tusks from which the berry-smeard lips were lifted in a snarl.

"Lucky Heather!" she gasped. "Too close for comfort, that one! I thought I was a goner! But I'm a bear hunter now! Wait 'til Alan hears of this. He won't tease me any more when he hears this story! I'm a bear hunter, now!"

It was freezing, every night, and the meat would not spoil. Her father could get it in the morning. So the happy girl went to her bag of berries and continued to pick. She had stopped for a moment at a dense patch of blueberries and was eating when the slight breeze carried a sound to her ears that straightened her where she sat, every muscle tense as wire. Again came the sound, louder now. It was men's voices!

Searching along the rim of the valley where it sloped from the barren, she saw nothing; she crawled to some ground juniper and edged in under its spreading branches. Soon the sound came again to her ears.

"Who can it be?" she said aloud. "McQueen or those Indians? And they're coming from the direction of the camp!"

Watching both shoulders of the narrow valley, at last she saw two men, carrying guns. They were walking along the rim of the swale, talking excitedly. She wondered if they had heard her shots—or they could see her. Nearer and nearer, they came until, hardly a stone's throw distant on the lip of the valley, above her, they stopped. Her heart faltered. Suppose they should see the dead bear.

For a space a thick-set white man with a beard argued heatedly with his companion, an Indian.

"The man Rough mauled, that night!" she thought, trembling where she lay,

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hugging the moss beneath the thick juniper. "But who is the other? What's a white man doing here on the Talking? Can it be McQueen's found his way back to the forks?"

But the men noticed nothing so engrossed were they in their talk. Shortly they moved on, while the agitated girl lay for a long time after they had disappeared from sight. Then she made her way back home over the barren.

REACHING the Sinking Lakes Alan and Noel worked to the limit of their strength against the coming of the "Freezing Moon" that, in October, would ride high over the barren. As they sat in front of their tent before their fire on the frosty

"Shish! Listen!"

The two men sat with straining ears. Presently, far above them in the frosty air they heard the faint, clarinet-like, marching chorus of a flock of whistling swan. High up under the stars, that shone blue behind the pearly banners of the aurora that writhed across the heavens, they passed like ghosts on their long pilgrimage to southern waters.

"Guess that's about the last of those boys, this year," said Alan. "Straight from Baffin Land, I'll bet! Well, Noel, my lad, the long snows'll soon be with us, and then—the big jump off!"

Day by day the platform fish-cache, mounted on high, peeled spruce saplings, ringed with inverted cod-hooks to baffle climbing wolverines, received the night's catch of the two gill-nets. Great lake trout, the Montagnais kokmesh, "the fish that swallows everything," some running to 20 pounds in weight, white-fish, jackfish or northern pike, red and gray suckers, and ling, came to the nets. It would require an enormous supply of fish to feed the hungry Ungavas through the winter months, and there were four humans besides.

Deep in the spruce and tamarack swamps that circled some of the chain of Sinking Lakes and gave them their name, Alan and Noel gave much relief to find scattered bands of caribou that had lingered behind the migration to winter in the valley and feed on the moss, called "old man's

"Heather the bear-hunter! But you've got to be careful. You can't take chances with those fellows. We can't afford to have that pretty face clawed up!"

She flushed suddenly, then, seemingly with an effort to calm herself, went on: "We may all be shooting something beside bear and deer, next summer," she said mysteriously.

"What d'you mean?" demanded Alan. Heather then described the two men she had seen on the barren.

"McQueen and the Indian Rough went after!" exclaimed Alan. "So McQueen, after all, reached the forks and ran into the Montagnais!" he commented. "Sure they didn't see you, Heather, when you left the valley?"

"Yes, it was almost dark when I came down across the barren."

"By gar, I don't see how dem people got out of de snow," exclaimed Noel, shaking his black head. "Well, they did!" replied Alan, "how what are we going to do about it?"

"Not a thing," said John McCord. "You've got those pups to break to a tandem hitch, your trap-lines to cover, and meat to hunt until the snow is right for you to search for the headwaters. We've got to play here with the grub. McQueen might be crazy enough to bother me this winter, try to get the map, but I doubt it. He'll wait. Our trouble will come in the spring."

"You promise that you and Heather will always keep together after this? No leaving each other! You'll always pack your guns? I wish you had Rough, but he'd leave and come back to me the minute he was loose."

Slowly the brown throat and cheeks of the girl flushed and the violet eyes winked hard. She turned her face away, then, chin cupped in brown hand.

"We'll be careful, I promise you," said John.

CHAPTER XVI

THE "Freezing Moon" had come. Each morning the boys had to break out their net buoys, for the film ice was reaching out far from the shore although the large lake on which they were camped was not as yet closed. Snowshoes, strung with caribou thongs, which, unlike moose and cow hide, shrink, when wet rather than stretch, were ready, as well as a long toboggan sled. Noel, expert hide worker, had made hooded parkas and smoke-tanned moccasins for snowshoeing, working with the strongest thread known, the split sinews from the back of a bull caribou.

So soon as the snow was deep enough for sledding, the puppies, growing like colts, were given their first lessons in tandem harness, for their short experience of the previous spring with the single fan-hitch of the Eskimos was of little value. With Rough as leader, followed in turn by Powder, Rogue, and Shot as wheel or sled dog, the big puppies were started in the school of collar, trace and trail. On the young snow of those keen October days, when the wind had the edge of a knife, it was a joy to Alan and Noel to train dogs with such spirit and power.

Rapidly the winter shut in and the



Heather Gazed in Awe at the Great Yellow Tassels From Which the Berry-Smeared Lips Were Lifted in a Snarl

evenings, with the dogs lying around them, they made plans for the search for a water way to the Koksoak when the large lakes froze and the snow packed hard for sledging.

"Our finding this River of Skulls is just a question of meat and fish, Noel, if the Indians leave us alone," said Alan. The Montagnais shook his head, doubtfully.

"We're going to have a lot of pemmican, flour, and beans in that emergency cache at the head of the river. Pemmican keeps all summer and we'll make plenty, for there are deer wintering in this valley."

beard," that draped the dry spruce.

Before the October freeze-up closed the river and the large lake on which they were camped, the boys made a hurried visit to the McCords with a canoe load of trout and meat and the pie-bald skins of young caribou to be turned into hooded parkas and moccasins. There news awaited them.

"Boys," announced McCord as they sat down to supper, "Heather got her first bear, last week. Had a pretty close call too. She also got something else that will surprise you."

"Good for you, Heather!" exclaimed Alan, reaching and shaking her hand.

front strengthened. Farther and farther out the ice sheet reached in the lake and, near the shore, became so thick that they raised their nets. But the big cache was now piled high with frozen fish. The "Moon of the Hoar Frost" came, when the frozen moisture in the air sparkled like myriad diamonds in the sun, "poudre days" as the French call them, and the snow made deeper and deeper in the valleys as the "drifters" from Hudson's Straits swept over the tundra. And during this month the boys hunted far into the swamps of the upper valley to bring back caribou meat to be pounded into pemmican, and marrow from the round bones, which they stored in bags for emergency rations. Twice, when the river closed, they drove the dogs down to the cabin on the Takkling to find all well with John and Heather and no news from McQueen.

And then, at last, came the Montagnais "Moon When the Snow Hangs in the Trees," and, in the middle of December, Alan and Noel started with the dogs to search for the headwater lakes of the Koksoak.

Over the barrens flanking the valley of the Sinking Lakes, they traveled into the northeast. But it was a long-faced Noel who trotted behind the eager dogs over the sparkling tundra.

"No one evar go into dis cuntry and come back," he reminded Alan as they stood on a high barren and gazed over the undulating white waste to the north and east, seemingly as lame as the sun slanted across its limitless expanse.

"Well," said Alan, dropping his mitten slung to his neck by a thong and wiping the rime from his face with a hare band, "some one always has to be first, eh, Rough?"

For days they traveled north of the valley of the Sinking Lakes but, in that direction, beyond the dim, blue hills they had often seen from the valley, they found no water courses flowing north; no headwater lakes.

One morning they headed into the southeast. In the sparsely wooded valleys, snow-white arctic hares, their long ears tipped with black, jumped from willow thickets to race away at the coming of the dog-team. Once, at a distance, three curious white foxes danced grotesquely on the snow, inspecting the approach of the team, until they decided, getting their scent, set up a frenzied yelping which drove them away over the tundra, like wisps of white smoke.

Because of the wood, the boys had stopped in a small valley, where a stream headed, to boil their kettle. After eating, they continued south and came out of the fold in the hills to higher country. As Alan, who was leading the team, reached the lip of the valley and looked far into the east, he raised his hands with a shout.

"Noel!" he cried. "Look at that lake over there! We've found it!"

Noel joined him and the two gazed in amazement across the tundra. There, miles away to the east, beyond the low hills of the foreground, reached the level, white shell of an enormous lake, until it was lost in the haze of the distance.

"Why, it's as big as Lake Bienville on the Great Whale, Noel!" exclaimed Alan

excitedly. "This must be one of the lakes in the old men's tales."

The Indian stood in awe gazing at the white reaches of the distant lake. Far to the north and south stretched the shimmering floor of snow and wind-scoured ice, and into the east, until it merged with the horizon.

"Eet ees ver' beeg lak", he said. "Big riviere floe, out of dis."

"And that river must be a headwater of the Koksoak!" cried Alan. "We're over the Height-of-Land. The rivers all run north, here! We've found it, Noel! We've found it!"

That night the boys camped on the shore of the great lake in the wind break of a stand of black spruce. While the dogs lay curled in the sleep-holes, Alan and Noel talked beside a roaring fire.

"We'll travel right around this lake until we find the outlet, Noel. Then we'll hunt to find a way to get into it with the canoes from the Sinking Lakes."

"Mebbe dis lak' not flow into de beeg riviere."

the shore. Cutting in beyond the island they found that the lake reached to the north, like the fingers on a hand, in three separate bays. And from each of these ran an outlet.

"Look, Noel," said Alan, as they stood on a low hill and followed the channels of the three streams with the binoculars. "These outlets run right into the north through a flat valley and must join, later. I tell you we're on Koksoak water. To the east the ridges all run north and south—not a break in them. We've found it, boy! We're on the Koksoak!"

The Indian nodded his head in agreement.



With Rough as Leader, the Big Puppies Were Started in the School of Collar, Trace, and Trail

"Noel, this lake is surely the headwaters of the big river, or one of its branches. It's got to be, flowing north as the river does. And we'll soon find out."

Snug in their caribou sleeping bags, the tired boys slept beside their fire. In the morning, they started along shore over the wind-brushed ice in search of the outlet. All day they traveled rapidly north until, shortly after noon, when the light died, they were at the end of the lake, but as yet had found no outlet which would lead, as they hoped, into the north and the great Koksoak. The next morning they saw what appeared to be a long island lying off

"Now we'll follow the east shore and see if this is the main discharge. Some of these lakes have two. But I'm positive no water could run to the east, from the lay of the country, it's bound to travel north."

With the boys riding the toboggan, away galloped the dogs along the eastern shore. In an hour, looking across the wide expanse of ice into the southwest they could barely see the white hills from which they had discovered the great lake. In places, the hard snow, carved by the wind, rippled away for miles like white waves; in places the ice was scoured almost clean of its snow blanket, making sledding a delight. On, up the east shore, the eager dogs took them at a gallop. But at noon the sun in the south was gradually smothered in haze. To the north banks of lead-colored clouds piled above the white hills.

"Snow comin'," announced Noel, as they stopped to give the dogs a short breathing spell.

"Sure enough!" agreed Alan. "What do you say to crossing the lake to the camp we had two nights back in that thick timber? It may be an old drifter and last for days. With the hills run-

Continued on Page 12



The CASE of the BORROWED GRAVE

"Opossum Bill" Matches Wits With a Pair of Desperate Murderers by AL W. BRENZER



JEFF SHOOLER was to be buried at 10 a. m. in the Hopedale Cemetery. He was Dry Ridge Township's oldest citizen and last G. A. R. veteran. Farmers, woodchoppers, and quarrymen began to arrive in Hopedale early for the funeral. Among the first arrivals was Opossum Bill Giles, the diminutive constable of Dry Ridge Township. He drove slowly up Main Street, and parked his dinky sedan in front of Ike Keller's hardware store.

"Wonder what's eatin' at Clem Kooly?" drawled Opossum Bill, pointing at the rapidly approaching figure of Hopedale's official grave-digger.

"My-yoh if I know," answered Ike Keller. "I ain't seen Clem with such a shuffle on, sence Ace Wolford's house was struck by lightnin'."

Clem Kooly puffed up to the little group in front of the hardware store. He flung his old felt hat down on the sidewalk, and blurted angrily:

"Enough's enough, begun begob! I'm swearin' out a warrant—a John Doe warrant—six John Doe warrants, yesh, ten of 'em!"

"Anything wrong, Clem?" inquired Opossum Bill.

"Wrong!" bellowed Clem. "Wrong! Why Jeem's master, men! Jeff Shooler's grave is full up, an' the pine rough-box is gone. But this time them ornery Yetz boys, an' the long-legged Hank Riggel has went too blame fur. They kin hide my shovels, an' take the handle outa my pick, but gentmans, when they go to carryin' off a rough-box an' fillin' up a grave, why by the tarnal Jupiter, I—"

"My-yoh, Clem, what d'ye aim to do?" cut in Ike Keller.

"I'm gonna hunt them young scoundrels, an' make 'em dig that grave open with tablepoons, an' fetch that rough-box back, an' then—"

"An' it's only an hour an' forty-five minutes till the funeral," Ike Keller again interrupted the irate Clem.

"A bunch o' us fellers better git at an' open up that grave," suggested Opossum Bill. "We kin deal with them cut-ups later."

There were more than enough volunteers for the task. The loose ground flew from the freshly filled grave, in 30 minutes: the shovel of Notorious Witters thudded on wood.

"Well now wouldn't that curdle the milk in yer gran'mother's spring green!" exploded Notorious. "Why they up an' buried the rough-box in the bottom o' the grave!"

The lid was carefully cleaned off, and lines fastened to its metal loops. Then the men pulled on the lines and the lid was hoisted out of the grave.

"Now about the box," said the grave-digger, "het's a horse of another color. We'll hafta leave it be, an' lower ole Jeff's coffin right inter her where she is, 'cause it's plum' stuck in there. Ob, fer



Words Failed Kooly as He Peered Into the Grave, and His Red Face Turned Chalky White

the— Words failed him as he peered into the grave, and his red face turned chalky white.

Lying in the pine rough-box was the body of a man. Sash cord bound the hands and feet, and the mouth was sealed with strips of adhesive tape. The distended eyes, the purple-bloated face and neck, and the distorted position of the body, bore shocking testimony to death by slow strangulation.

Opossum Bill was the first to speak. He said: "Men, this here's no boy-trick. This here's murder. Clem, go over to Joe Kump's an' telephone Sheriff White. Tell 'im somebuddy borried Jeff Shooler's grave, an' smothered a man in it last night."

The little constable studied the twisted, discolored features of the dead man from various angles.

"Yep," he said with a sigh of conviction, "it's Bert Henner."

Other men peered at the corpse with fresh interest, and agreed with Opossum Bill as to the ill-fated victim's identity. The dead man had been a deputy game warden. "Square Bert," he had been nicknamed, because of his gift for enforcing the game laws without incurring any man's ill-will.

SHERIFF WHITE arrived, bringing with him the coroner, and County Detective Jillion.

"He was, as I believe we can prove by an autopsy, buried alive," the coroner observed. "Death was a slow and horrible thing. Only a warped brain could conceive of such a foul murder."

The gruesomeness of the fantastic crime shook the sheriff until he seemed at a loss as to how to proceed. County Detective Jillion took charge. He chewed a cigar, and glared at the increasing group of farmers and billmen. He strode up to Opossum Bill, and said:

"If you'd kept this mob of hill billies away, Giles, we might find a clew—

tracks, or something. But they've milled around here till there's nothing left but these tombstones. You don't recall any tracks, or marks that might have been made by the murderers, do you?"

"No-oo," answered the little constable gently. "Ye see we was convinced this was a trick o' Hopedale's gang o' bad boys. Never expected to uncover no murder in thet grave."

"A lot of help you are," mocked Jill-

"Nother thing, Bert's gun was in its holster, fully loaded," observed the little constable mildly. "What does thet mean?"

"What do you think, Sherlock?" snapped Jilison.

"Thet Bert was took by surprise," answered Opossum Bill. "He musta knowed an' trusted the ones what tied 'im up. He never expected them to turn

Blacklog, an' up in Seven Valleys. I done some investigatin', an' foun' thet the deer-killin' was bein' done at night with jack-lights. So I tole Bert about it, an' we seen the lights an' heard shots, but the deer bootleggers allus managed to keep a jump ahead of us."

"Thet's what Bert's errand was to Seven Valleys. He wanted to lay fer the deer-killers, an' mebbe git the license number o' their truck, or car, an' git 'em sewed up good an' tight, before he showed up here. Find them deer bootleggers, Mister Jilison, an' I'll bet ye a bushel o' winter rambos, agin a wormy crabapple, thet ye'll have the murderers o' Bert Benner."

Jilison's hoarse gurgle was meant for a laugh.

"Sounds like something you got out of a book, Giles," he rasped. "But I'll just bear in mind," he added, "that as the case stands now, you were the last man to see Benner alive!"

With that, County Detective Jilison hurried to his parked car and drove away.

THAT afternoon as Opossum Bill was ready to drive back to his little store in Stamp Run Hollow, Jed Tabor stouped up to the little constable's sedan.

"I was up on Kilnpat yesterday evenin', locatin' a bee tree," began old Jed. "Never got home till it was plum late. Well, sir, 'Possum Billy, jist 'fore I stepped out the bushes on to Cold Springs road, a car passed by. They was four men in the car, an' I recognized 'em all but one."

Old Jed paused, and sent a stream of tobacco juice rainbowing over the hood of Opossum Bill's car.

"The three men what I knowed," Jed went on in a lowered voice, "was thet stuck-up new game warden, Jason Byne, an' this here loud-mouthed detectiff Jilison, an' Bert Benner. Fourth one was a plum stranger."

"Ye're right sure o' thet, are ye, Jed?" asked the little constable.

"Jest as shore ov it as I am thet this is red devil tobacco that I'm a chawin' right now!"

"I'm obliged to ye, Jed."

"Ye're ontirely welcome, 'Possum Billy."

OPOSSUM BILL peered over the brass rims of his spectacles, as a car stopped outside his little store. Game Warden Byne and Detective Jilison got out of the car, lit fresh cigars, pocketed their hands and came into the store. They were big, red-faced men, with high, round neckstashes, and blue serge suits.

"We been checking up on Benner's last day, Giles," growled Jilison. "He left a clear trail to your place. But here all trace of him ends, until he shows up in that pine box, smothered under six foot of dirt. Are you sure you tole all you know? After all, Giles, you're the last known man to see him alive."

"Bert stopped here at about 3 o'clock," emphasized Opossum Bill. "He left about half-past."

"Afout?" asked Byne.

"None. He druv," drawled Opossum Bill. "He was goin' up in Seven Valleys. Pulled away here at half-past three."

"Sort of finicky about the time, ain't



Opossum Bill Caught Sight of the Old Mountaineer Lying Near the Top of the Snowdust Mound

out to be his murderers. If he had, he'd 'a' died with his gun in his hand."

Opossum Bill slowly took an apple from a pocket of his rusty-black alpaca coat. With his eyes fixed on a fleecy cloud, he got out his old Barlow and began peeling the apple.

"I'll find the murder trail," persisted Jilison, "and when I do, Giles, you can bet your bottom dollar that it will lead right back into your neck of the woods!"

"Thet," said the little constable, with a piece of apple poised on his knife, "is jist what I figger too."

"Oh, you do, do you?" Jilison towered over the five-foot constable, and toothed his cigar.

"Yeah," answered Opossum Bill munching apple. "Ye see, Mister Jilison, Bert Benner stopped inter my store yesterday evenin' about 3 o'clock. He was headin' fer Seven Valleys."

"Now," bristled Jilison, "we're getting somewhere. I thought somebody would soon talk."

"Yeah," returned Opossum Bill, "an' I only wish I had more to say. I kin say though, thet somebody has bin bootleggin' deer outa the mountains fer a long spell. I bin findin' hides all around

son. "Here it is, three weeks yet till hunting season opens. That means Benner wasn't ganged up on 'by a mob of law-breaking city hunters. It means he was killed by local parties!"

"Ye don't mean—ye can't be hintin' thet Bert was buried alive by—by—"

"I mean," blurted Jilison, "that Benner was the victim of a tribe of mountaineers doe pelters!"

"This here killin' don't have no mountain earmarks stall, Mister Jilison," drawled the little constable.

"Mountain earmarks did you say?" rapped out Jilison.

"When a mountain man wants to kill a enemy er a sheep-killin' dog," answered Opossum Bill, "they's only one thing he thinks of. Thet's his fav'rite shootin' iron."

"Bah!" bawled the detective.

you Giles?" demanded Detective Jilison. "Yeah," drawled Opossum Bill, "because it proves I wasn't the last one to see Bert alive."

"You mean," croaked Jilison, jabbing a thick finger at Opossum Bill, "that Benner was seen after he left here?"

"About dusk," returned the little constable, selecting an apple from a tub on the counter. "Bert was seen in a car with three other men, goin' up Cold Springs road. I got a purty strong hunch that car was the hearse that took poor Bert to his unexpected funeral. Find that car, an' the rest'll be easy."

"If there's any proof, yes," put in Byrne. "Who sees the car with Benner and three other men in it?"

"Jed Taber."

Byrne and Jilison exchanged chilled glances.

"That old billy goat recognize anybody else in the car besides Bert Benner?" asked Jilison.

"Jed never said," lied the little constable gently.

"What's this cock and bull story you told Jilison here, about you and Benner being on the track of a gang of deer bootleggers?" asked Jason Byrne. "How do you know, Giles," he went on, "that the deer hides you found were not from deer killed by these Blacklog mountaineers?"

"In the first place, they was too many hides," answered Opossum Bill. "An' in the second place, a mountaineer never lets deer hides lay around. Houn's is hard enough to git deer-proofed, 'bout leavin' green deer hides layin' around for 'em to chaw on, an' git the deer-runnin' fever from. Taint only agin the law in this state fer dogs to run deer, but a deer-runnin' houn is a festerin' sore an' a consarnation to a fox er coon hunter. An' they ain't no man er Blacklog that don't hunt one er the other. They's why a mountain man purty nigh allus burns a illegal deer hide. He don't take no chances with the law er his huntin' dogs findin' it."

"We'd better beat it on up the mountain, and see what we can pump out of old Billy goat Taber," Jilison growled.

"That's right," assented Byrne. The two officers stalked out of the little store and got into their car. Opossum Bill watched their car out of sight. Then he hurried to his own battered sedan, and started in pursuit.

He did not follow far until he swerved from the highway, and headed up the mountainside. He sent his car over an old log-wagon trail. The going was rough, but it was a short-cut to Jed Taber's cabin. Opossum Bill hoped to get there ahead of Jilison and Byrne.

"Whoa, here, Levit!" exclaimed Opossum Bill, bringing his car to a jerking stop. His eyes had caught the glint of metal in a clump of bushes near the trail. He craned his neck, and saw that it was an automobile that had attracted his attention. Upon examination, the little constable found a coupe concealed in the bushes. He recognized it immediately.

It was Bert Benner's coupe. Opossum Bill turned his own car, and drove it back the trail a few hundred yards, until he discovered a place to conceal it. Then he hurried on foot toward Jed Taber's cabin, about a quarter mile away.

Opossum Bill kept under cover of the thick growth of brush that hemmed in Jed Taber's cabin. Jilison and Byrne were already there. Old Jed had a foot on the running board of the officers' car. Opossum Bill could hear the drone of their voices, but could not hear what they were saying. Suddenly Jilison's gurgling, unpleasant laugh reached Opossum Bill's ears. Then old Jed got into the car, and they drove up Cold Springs road.

Opossum Bill walked back to his car. He got one of the apples that lay scattered on the floor and rear seat, sat down on a log, got out his old Barlow, and gravely began to peel the apple. A procedure that meant the little constable's mind was occupied with a particularly knotty, and puzzling problem.

Suddenly he stiffened to alert attention. The snapping of twigs and rustling of dry leaves warned him of some one's approach. His mountain-trained ears traced the footsteps to the dead deputy's coupe. The door clanged softly shut. The starter whined, the motor sputtered, and began to purr. Gears clashed cautiously, and the coupe was backed slowly into the overgrown trail.

Opossum Bill flitted like a shadow,



through a thicket of laurel, until he was in a position to see into the coupe. Crouching in the bushes, himself unnoticed, he recognized the driver of the coupe as County Detective Jilison.

Opossum Bill's ears traced the progress of the coupe. It snarled softly, as it was eased down the steep, rough trail in low gear. Then it whined in a high pitch as it was crowded up Cold Springs road in second.

"Why Judas Kelly?" muttered the little constable. "Jilison up an' turned back the ole dug road. Why thet leads back to the old Watson sawmill stand, an' ends in a pile o' sawdust bigger 'n a Adams County barn! Jilison is up to somepin an' dad-driven if I ain't gonna find out what it is!"

Opossum Bill left the trail and cut across a shoulder of Chamberlain's hill. At first he thought only of speed. As he neared his destination he became stealthy as an Indian. A muffled, metallic sound reached him. It came from the huge sawdust pile, now but 300 yards away.

A dense growth of willows, scrub oak, sumac, and spicewood cut off Opossum Bill's view of the sawdust heap. His years as a coon and opossum hunter had made him an agile climber. He was soon high enough in a beech to have a clear view of the sawdust mound.

Then he saw what was making that occasional clinking sound. Jilison and Byrne were breast-deep in the sawdust. They were facing each other, and shovel-

ing feverishly. In their haste, their shovels struck together occasionally with a dull clang.

For some seconds the little constable was so absorbed in watching the two men's strange work, that he did not notice Jed Taber. Then he caught sight of the old mountaineer lying near the top of the sawdust mound. Old Jed was tied, hand and foot. His spike of a white chin-whisker was topped by a band of adhesive tape, forming the letter T. Opossum Bill's mustache wore its usual smile-curves, but his mild blue eyes became cold as ice cubes.

Opossum Bill knew that ice, buried in sawdust, will keep indefinitely. But instinct told him that Jilison and Byrne were not digging a pit in which to bury ice. He watched them dig down until they were out of sight.

Then the shovels were tossed out of the hole, and Byrne boosted Jilison up. The latter reached down and gave Byrne a lift. They looked sharply about, from the top of the sawdust stack, then picked up the bound and gagged mountaineer, and rolled him into the hole they had dug. They were both six-footers, and they carried their pistols. Opossum Bill was without a weapon, except for his old Barlow knife.

The two again looked in every direction, then snatched up their shovels and began to cover old Jed with sawdust. They got on opposite sides of the hole, and worked like fiends. The sawdust grave was soon full. They cached their shovels, and Byrne raced to his car, while Jilison streaked for the dead deputy's coupe. They sent the cars back toward Cold Springs road as if they were fleeing before a cyclone.

Opossum Bill hit the ground running. He sped to the concealed shovels, caught one up, and set to work. He did not dig down from the top of old Jed's sawdust grave. Instead, he started digging well down one sloping side of the sawdust mound. He dug a trench. As it lengthened, it sloped upward. Thus, the little constable was working sawdust downward, and he made every sweep of the shovel tell.

The little constable thought he would never reach the buried mountaineer. His wry arms worked like pistons. Sweat dripped from his face, dampened his clothes, and formed in great drops on the back of his hands. After what seemed to Opossum Bill like an hour, but which was scarcely five minutes, he uncovered old Jed's booted feet.

The little constable threw aside the shovel, and grasped Jed's ankles. He gave a mighty heave, and bore old Jed down the side of the sawdust mound on a miniature avalanche. He stripped the tape from the limp mountaineer's mouth, and cut away his bonds. He pumped old Jed's arms, then kneaded his chest. After a short spasm of trembling, old Jed yawned, then slowly gasped his way back to consciousness.

Opossum Bill cautioned Jed not to try to talk, while he filled up the trench he had dug into the sawdust grave. Finally satisfied that the sawdust mound looked just as Jilison and Byrne had left it, the little constable replaced the shovel where he had found it. Then he piloted

BY COMPARISON

MIN PLAYS MATCHMAKER

By Allan F. Herdman



ANK CRABB held the screen door open, and Min came toddling into the spacious farmhouse kitchen, her arms full of packages and paper bags.

"Thort yer war never comin' home," complained Min's husband, looking up at the antique walnut clock on the wall. "Ten arter twelve. I war bergianin' ter feel sort o' empty-like."

"I can't help it," said Min, laying her parcels down on the kitchen table. "I met Fidelia Bunyon just as I war leavin' ther store an' I war askin' her what she'd charge fer makin' me er suit fer autumn if I furnished ther goods. She's over sewin' fer Armindie Mooney right now. She don't like ter work ther though. Finds Armindie too bossy like ever-one does. Why didn't yer put ther teakettle over ther fire in ther range if yer so hungry? It wouldn't o' took so long ter make tea fer lunch. Didn't yer know ther war crullers an' cookies inter ther crock? Why didn't yer eat one o' them ter—"

"I did eat three or four crullers, Min, but they don't satisfy yer like er reg'lar lunch with fried peritaters."

"I guess yer not starvin'," said Min. "I didn't mean fer yer to eat ther whole crock full."

"War ther any mail ter ther post office, Min?"

"Jest er special sale caterlog from ther mail order compny ter Chicago, an' er short letter from Emma. Her an' ol' Van Swain is comin' up from Middleville ter spend Sunday with us. I guess Van Swain goes somewhar erbout ever week-end since he bort that ther new 8 sport coupe of him's."

Hank Crabb scratched his semi-bald pate thoughtfully. "Tell me somethin', Min. Has er—has ol' Van Swain really got money or ain't he? He don't seem ter work at nothin', wears coats with tails, striped pants, them thar gray spats over his partend leather shoes, carries er cane with his nittails an' famly crest stamped onter ther silver head, an'—yar, most fergot—allus er white starched vest with that thar big gold dorg chain draped across it and hooked onter er dollar watch inter his pocket. Think if he had money—"

"Course he's got money!" interrupted Min. "Em says he's got investments inter ol' stocks an' er new mouse trap compny what make traps what catches ther mouse 'fore he eats ther cheese. Quite er idee'n I thort."

"Yar, funny I thort." "Yar, funny I never thort up that invention. Great how some fellers makes money. Simple enough too.—Er a—how much do yer s'pose ol' Van Swain are wuth by now, Min?"

"Emma says he's wuth at least \$25,000 'cause one night when he war callin' onter her his bank deposit book fell outn his pocket onter ther sofa inter ther parlor. Em said she quick pushed it in back of a pillor onter ther sofa an'

when he had went home she looked it over."

"Did Emma know how ter figger out how much he had inter ther bank?"

"Course she did, Hank Crabb. Any one would know how ter do that. She jest took er pencil an' er piece o' paper an' added up all ther numbers in sight. Come ter most \$25,000 but Em 'lowed some off fer checks he might o' drawed ergain his ercount fer them ther big black cigars he smokes."

"Yar, he give me er couple oncet. Arter that I knowed enough ter stick

'thin', yer suster Em can't make er bid fer er husban' on looks erione. Now if she had went ter college an' could discusse liter'ature an' trav'lin' in Egypt an' ther Orient an' knowed somethin' 'bout investments in oil stock an' mouss traps an' things so's they have somethin' inter common ter discusse, then Em would have er better chance with ther ol' feller. Bout all Em knows is ombroiderin' an' makin' lace tatin' fer pillors an' things an' sewin' ter-gether rag rugs. Em can't enjoy listenin' ter him tork 'bout sailin' 'round



Pulling Her Skirt Above Her Knee, Fidelia Showed Min a Neatly Mended Run in Her Stocking as Some One Coughed Back of Her

ter my ol' corncob an' pipe terbacker—that or my plug terbacker."

"He'd make Emma er right good husban' jest ther same!" defended Min.

"Yar—course—ther ain't no denyin' that thar, Min. Takes him plenty long enough ter pop ther question ter Emma though. I'd think yer suster would get tired of waitin' fer him ter say somethin'."

"Wal, what of it?" flared Min. "I guess a man wants ter be sure, don't he? If I had it ter do over ergin I'd er took more time 'fore I—"

"But I don't think ol' Van Swain will ever ask Emma ter marry him, Min. If he intended ter I think he would have perposed 'fore this. Looks like all he are interrested in are this har platonic friendship sort o' er 'rangement. Course if er woman are special extraactive she might win him over ter ther gettin' married idee'n in time, but yer see Emma ain't—er a if Em war only—"

"Are yer incineratin' Em ain't good lookin' enough ter extract ol'—?" began Min.

"I ain't incineratin' nothin', Min. Course with all rerspect meant an' ever-

ther canals o' Venice inter them thar gondolas, and he don't give er whoop whether er pillor has fancy tatin' onter it or not. Yer see what I means, Min. Now if Em could only cook good an' bake good so she war better'n other women by comparison, but ther yer are ergain, Em don't like cookin' an' bakin', an' ol' Van Swain likes good cookin' an' cakes an' pies an' things, I don't b'lieve he'll ever perpose ter Em."

"Better'n other women by comparison," Min repeated her husband's words aloud. "Speakin' o' comparisons, Hank Crabb, give me a idear. Mebbe what ol' Van Swain needs are some strikin' comparison."

"Fer instance," said Hank Crabb. "Wal, said Min, 'It come to me like er flash, s'pose when Em an' Van Swain are here ter dinner Sunday, we set him down onter one side of ther table, an right across ther table onter ther other side whar he can't help but take notice

of how they looks, we'll have Em set 'onside of Fidelia Bunyon."

"Oh-oh!" chuckled Hank Crabb. "I think I see what yer mean, Min. I think yer got somethin' thar. Long-side of Fidelia, even Em would show up good—by comparison!"

"And I'll drop er few hints ter of Van Swain at her dinner table that it's 'bout time he bort er ring fer Em. Thar's no sense of lettin' this har courtship drag on fer ever."

"Yor darned tootin'!" agreed Hank Crabb. "Thar ain't no sense in lettin' er \$25,000 husband get erway onter Em. I'll give me an' you sort o' er comfortable feelin' too, ter know he's thar in case we don't have our tax money ready on time or the infrest onter ther mortgage when it's due."

"We'll do all we can ter make him like us an' Em on Sunday. I'll even bake one of my nice graham cracker pies especial' fer him. I better call up Armindie's right erway an' get Fidelia onter ther phone ter see if she can come all right."

ABOUT 11 o'clock Sunday morning, Winston L. Van Swain, with Min's sister Em at his side drove down the Crabb farm lane and brought his shiny light blue EZ-8 coupe to a stop opposite the kitchen door. Min and Hank Crabb rushed out the kitchen and down the porch steps to greet them.

"So glad to see you both!" laughed Min, kissing Em on the nose as she stepped down from the runboard of the car to the ground. "It was so good of you to bring Em to see us again," said Min, shaking hands with Em's wealthy gentleman friend. "We always look forward to your coming, me and Hank. Somehow you seem to be just like one of the family," cooly giggled Min. "Who knows—mebbe someday you will be!" Min wasn't losing any time in getting her campaign to catch a husband for Em, under way.

"Why Min!" exclaimed Em. "What are you talking about?"

"Never you mind!" laughed Min, and smiling sweetly at Mr. Van Swain: "We have er secret, haven't we, Mr. Van Swain?"

"What's that? What's this?" said Mr. Van Swain, briskly, and appearing very uncomfortable.

"I said, 'Who knows—mebbe someday soon—'!"

"Care if I raise ther hood o' yer new car an' take er look at ther motor, Mr. Van Swain?" asked Hank Crabb, and Min looked daggers at him for his untimely interruption.

"I'll raise it for you," offered Em's gentleman friend, afraid Hank Crabb might scratch the pretty blue car enamel.

FIDELIA BUNYON arrived just in time for dinner and apologized to Min in the kitchen for being late. Pulling her pink gabardine skirt to her suit up above her knee she showed Min a neatly mended run in her silk stocking. "I had to mend it before I came. Min. It took Armindie about an hour to find the right spool of thread."

"Hrrumph!" some one coughed in

Continued on Page 21



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BRINGING UP FATHER

By

George McManus



ROSIE'S BEAU

By George McManus



THE BUNGLE FAMILY

By
H. J. Tuthill

WHAT A RUST, AFTER ALL OUR TROUBLE WALKING TO TOWN FOR A KEY TO THIS TREASURE CHEST, WE LOST IT.



DIDN'T YOU HAVE THE KEY? AND DIDN'T YOU...



OH OH, WHO'S THIS COMING? WHAT, A PIRATE?

PLENTY HARD LOOKIN' BABY, EH?



IT'S CAPTAIN KIDD, HIS NAME IS ON THIS CHEST AND I'VE SEEN PICTURES OF HIM.

H-O-R-U-MPH! BY THUNDER, HERE'S THE CHEST! LOOK SHARP, SWABS! WHO TOOK IT OUT OF THE WATER?



SPEAK UP, SOMEBODY, OR BY THE LORD HARRY I'LL LET DAYLIGHT BETWEEN YOUR RIBS!



AND THIS BIG SWAB!

GET UP OFF THAT CHEST!

HOMER, GET UP, OR...



SO! MUTINY, EH?



UP!



AFTER THIS, MY HEARTY, WHEN YOU'RE SPOKE TO YOU'LL OBEY ORDERS, OR BY THUND...



HOMER! WAIT! DON'T...

STAND BACK! ONE MORE STEP AND I'LL...



OH STOP! STOP!

HELP! HELP! POLICE!



SHORT STORIES

By H. J. Tuthill



Poems



NEW AND OLD FAVORITES

WESSEX

DO YOU think of me at all,
Wistful ones?
Do you think of me at all
As I might?
Do you think of me at all
As the creep of evening fall
Or when the sky-birds tell
As they fly?

Do you look for me at times,
Wistful ones?
Do you look for me at times
Strained and still?
Do you look for me at times,
When the hour for walking chimes,
On that grassy path that climbs
Up the hill?

You may hear a jump or trot,
Wistful ones,
You may hear a jump or trot—
Mine, as there—
You may hear a jump or trot
On the stair or on the plot;
But I shall cause it not,
Be not there.
You call as when I knew you,
Wistful ones,
Should you call as when I knew you,
Should you call as when I knew you,
I should not turn to view you,
I shall not listen to you,
Shall not come.

—THOMAS HARDY.

THERE IS AN ANSWER

SHE'S only six—but oh, how old
Her questions baffle me!
But it's been going on since—well,
I think—since she was three.

She asked: "Why can't I see God?"—as
she turned her gaze aloft;
Then: "Why can't we fly high—like birds?"—
And—"Are clouds hard—or soft?"

I've answered why—and where—and when—
And tried hard to be truthful;
But it's so difficult sometimes,
When waiting ears are youthful.

And now she's raised her trusting face,
And pauses in her play:
"Do stars bring babies—honestly?"—
I don't know what to say!

—LYLA MYERS.

THE TWILIGHT OF LIFE

"WE HAVE loved the stars too fondly
To be fearful of the night."
We have faced life's foe too often
To be frightened from the fight.
We have seen the lightning's flashes,
We have heard the thunder's roar;
We have ridden plunging waters—
But they terrify no more.

In the autumn of our living
We dread not the winter's blast,
For the summer of our springtime
Shall endure until the last.
Though life be still a struggle,
A dark November day
Is fully compensated
By an hour of sunny May.

So through the days left for us
In this best of worlds we know,
Let there be no fear or clinging
When we're bidden by the foe.
And when we start our journey
To our great beloved star,
May God grant us speedy sailing
When we have crossed the bar.

—NORMAN I. SCHILLER.

THE HAPPIEST HEART

WHO drives the horses of the sun
Shall lead it but a day;
Better the lonely deed were done,
And kept the humble way.

The rust will fade the sword of fame,
The dust will hide the cross;
No, none shall nail so high his name
Tis not for fear it does.

The happiest heart that ever beat
Was in some quiet breast
That found the common daylight sweet,
And left to Heaven the rest.

—JOHN VANCE CREECH.

LAST LINES

NO COWARD soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's storm-troubled
sphere;
I see heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying life—have power in Thee!

Vain are the thousand creeds,
That move men's hearts, unutterably vain;
Worthless as wither'd weeds,
Or idles froth amid the boundless main.

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by thine infinity;
So surely anchor'd on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

With wide-embracing love
Thy spirit animates eternal years,
Permeates and transcends all space,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates and rears.

—EMILY BRONTE.

THE BUSY BEE

A BUMBLE-BEE in a clover field,
Was busy gathering sweets;
It hummed a plain and simple tune,
While busy with the bees.

As the bee was flitting 'mongst the
blooms,
A dog came on the scene,
A vicious, mangy, top-headed cur,
With disposition mean.

In the business of the humble-bee,
He mused, as the story goes,
Till the creature turned from its quest
of sweets,
And lit on the old dog's nose.

'Tis hard to tell, unless you know,
Just how a simple touch,
Upon a tender spot like that,
Can hurt so very much.

This lesson from the dog and bee,
Now seems to be complete,
Don't meddle with the business end
Of things you chance to meet.

—HARRY HARRAW.

THE POWER AND THE GLORY

STRANGE, we so toil to fashion for our
unseen ends
The splendors that the turnip of this world
doth mend—
Such palaces that crumble to a ruined one,
Such garbed memories upon Spain's trophic
page—
When all the lasting glory of our life depends
Upon a little child, a stable, and a star.

—GILBERT EMERY.

FROM "SYLVIA"

WHO wants a gown
Of purple fold,
Embrodered down
The seams with gold?
See here!—a Tulip richly laced
To please a royal fairy's taste!

Who wants a cap
Of crimson grand?
By great good hap
I've one on hand:
Look, sir!—a Cock's comb, flowering red,
The just the thing, sir, for your head!

Who wants a frock
Of velvet hue?
Or snowy smock?
Fair maid, do you?
O me!—a Ladysmock so white!
Your beauteous self is not more bright!

Who wants to sport
A slender limb?
I've every sort
Of hose for him!
Both scarlet, striped and yellow ones.
This Woodbine makes such pantaloons!

Who wants—(hush! hush!)
A box of paint?
Twill give a blush,
Yet leave no taint:
This Rose with natural rouge is fill'd,
From its own dewy leaves distill'd.

—GEORGE DARLEY.

THE WITCH IN THE GLASS

"MY MOTHER says I wend not pass
For me that shot afar;
She is afraid that I will see
A little witch that looks like me,
With a red, red smock to whisper low
The very thing I should not know!"

"Alack for all your mother's care!
A bird of the air,
A staffed rind, or fl fl expose
Sent by some hapless boy a rose,
With breath too sweet, will whisper low
The very thing you should not know!"

—SARAH MORGAN BRYAN PATT.

TELLING THE BEES

BATHSHEBA came out to the sun,
Out to our walled cherry-trees;
The tears down her cheek did run,
Bathsheba standing in the sun,
Telling the bees.

My mother had that moment died;
Unknown, sped I to the trees,
And plucked Bathsheba's hand aside:
Thus caught the name that there she cried
Telling the bees.

Her look I never can forget,
I sat had sobbing to her knees;
The cherry-boughs above us met;
I think I see Bathsheba yet
Telling the bees.

—LESLIE WOODWORTH REESE.

TO A ROSE

O, ROSE, and in her golden hair
You shall forget the garden scene;
The sunshine is a negative there,
And grows her with a constant noon.
And when your spicy odor goes,
And fades the beauty of your bloom,
Think what a lovely hand, O Rose,
Shall place your body in the tomb!

—FRANK DEWINTER SHERMAN.

THE CASE OF THE BORROWED GRAVE

Continued from Page 13

old Jed Tabor back to his hidden sedan.

With Jed finally seated safely in the old sedan, Opossum Bill said: "I'm gonna an' put yer caution yer woman, Jed. They's apples there in the oak o' the car. Eat two, three till I git back. Nothin' like chawin' on a apple to settle a body's nerves, an' put ye in gear when yer clutch gits to slippin'."

Opossum Bill returned in half an hour. "Yer missus knows ye're safe, Jed," he drawled, with a twinkle in his mild, blue eyes. "But in the mornin' she's gonna report ye missin', an' take on some-pan scandalus. An' I bet a plug o' red devil agin a busted stogy that Jillson an' Byne'll go over Blacking with a fine tooth comb bartin' fer ye."

"Yeah. They'll be combin' the mountain to make sure nobuddy gits wise to thet sawdust grave they put me in, the rock-sidin' copperheads!" exploded old Jed. "They faulted me inter goin' with 'em. Said they foun' somepin thet'd clear up Bert Benner's killin'. Said it was right back the dug road a ways. Byne stopped his car about half way back to the ole sawmill stand, an' they both got out, Jillson sez, 'look what we foun' over here in the brush!'"

"I follered 'em inter some laurel, an' before I could say Jack Robinson, them pizen, belly-crawl'n copperheads had me tied an' taped up tighter 'n the ole Harry."

"Then they put me in the back o' the car, an' Jillson he lit out fer Chamberlain's hill. Byne driv on back to the

sawdust stack with me. As he driv erlong, he sez to me: 'Tomorow mornin' the word'll go around thet you've disappeared. But ye ain't gonna be foun'. We'll take care o' thet,' he sez. 'The public 'll figger that ye've left the country because ye were guilty o' help-

FROM "THRESCORE AND TEN"

WHO reach their threescore years and ten,

As I have mine, without a sigh,
Are either more or less than men—
Not such an I.

I am not of them; life to me
Has been a strange, bewildering dream,
Wherein I knew not things that be
From things that seem.

I thought, I hoped, I knew one thing,
And had one gift, when I was young—
The impulse and the power to sing,
And so I sung.

They left me here, they left me there,
Went down dark pathways, one by one—
The wise, the great, the young, the fair;
But I went on.

And I go on! And yet so good,
The old allotted years of men
I have endured as best I could,
Threescore and ten!

—RICHARD HANLEY STODOLSKY.

ner's killin' wasn't no one-man job, so two men was to drop outa sight to make it look right. An' them two men was to be me an' you, Possum Billy. They said they was plenty o' everdence agin the both of us. An' with our disappearance, why the everdence wuz left erbout convince everbuddy thet we was the pair thet done erway with pore Bert Benner."

"Um-m," muttered Opossum Bill, bringing his sedan to a stop. "They figger they've got ye, Jed," he drawled on, "an' they got me to git. Um-m. We gotta work fast. They'll more 'n likely plan fer me to drop out o' sight purty near the same time the report gits out thet ye're missin'. Yep. We gotta work fast. Here's what we'll do. Ye'll hide in the brush till after dark. Then slip inter the house. I'll caution Ma so's she won't

give it erway that ye've been 'raised from the dead!" An' I'll call a young friend o' mine thet's a trooper in the state police—Trooper Shattuck. He's a smart boy. We got enough on Jillson an' Byne right now, to hang 'em higher 'n Haaman. But we can't prove it. Mebbe with the trooper on our side, 's'orter watchin' thet pair purty close, he'll see somepin sooner er later thet'll fix their clocks fer 'em! Yep, Jed, we gotta git outside help. An' they ain't no better help fer this kind o' a job than a state cop."

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IN RESPONSE to a telephone call from Opossum Bill, Trooper Shattuck and the little

constable talked late into the night in the little mountain store. Opossum Bill related all that he knew pertaining to Bert Benner's mysterious murder, and he told what had taken place at Jeb Tabor's cabin on the mountain and at the old sawmill stand.

"An' so," Opossum Bill was saying, "if them loony officers do keep their threat to git me, an' I should be caught nappin', I'll more 'n likely find what's left of 'me buried in that sawdust pile. If that should happen, ye'll know who to suspect."

"If that should happen, Constable Giles," said the trooper, "I'll get the guilty persons or die in the attempt. But it will not happen. We won't let it happen. We—"

"Hands up!" The command was rasped out in the doorway of the little store. Two masked men stood outside, the muzzles of their pistols pressed against the rusty screen door. A single kerosene lamp, bracketed on a central post, threw a soft light over the store's interior, and glinted on the guns of the intruders.

Trooper Shattuck's hand streaked to his holstered pistol. Before he could complete his draw, a blast of gunfire crashed through the screen door. The trooper swayed on his legs, slowly folded to the floor, and lay in a heap.

The masked pair leaped inside, swiftly bound and gagged Opossum Bill, then one of them carried him on his shoulder to their waiting car, and dumped him into the rear. As the car sped up the mountain road, Jed Tabor hurried across the road to the store, to ascertain the cause of the shots he had heard, as he dozed on Ma Giles' "spare bed," fully dressed.

Opossum Bill was in no doubt as to the identity of his twin-like masked captors. Nor was he in any doubt as to the fate that awaited him. The little constable strained at his bonds. His struggles only seemed to tighten the knotted ropes on his wrists and ankles.

After an hour of rough going the car stopped. Opossum Bill wormed into a position to see out of the car. The dim outlines of the giant mound of sawdust towered above the car. The moon, slipping behind the black bulk of Chamberlain's hill, cast spectral shadows over the forlorn spot. "The little constable's captors went unerringly to the hidden shovels, then padded to the top of the sawdust heap, and began to dig.

Opossum Bill kept his night-hunting-trained eyes on the shadowy forms of the diggers. They sank lower as they dug. Soon they were waist-deep. Slowly the sawdust grave deepened until their heads vanished. To their watching prisoner they seemed to have melted into the eerie shadows, that hung over the spot in ever-increasing thickness, as the moon slipped lower behind

A moving shadow flitted among the still, dead shadows of the night, and

glided to the car in which Opossum Bill was held prisoner. A door of the car swung open as silently as the flapping wings of a great horned owl, which at that instant glided over the sawdust mound. A keen-edged knife was slipped cautiously under Opossum Bill's wrist bonds. There was the slight, crisp sound of a keen blade cutting ropes, and Opossum Bill's wrists were free. The sound was repeated, and the ropes fell from his ankles. The little constable winced as he peeled the tape from his mouth.

Then two other shadows began to move toward the car from the top of the sawdust pile. A cold, familiar object was thrust into Opossum Bill's hand. The two approaching shadows took on the forms of men. A flashlight suddenly blazed in one of their hands. The cold, familiar object Opossum Bill found in his hand, kicked up as it barked. The flashlight was smashed out by a bullet from the little constable's old-fashioned .32-caliber revolver.

"Hold the phone!" Opossum Bill's drawl had a sharp edge to it. He added: "Ye're covered like a blanket

wraps, Opossum Bill and old Jed placed the body of Jillson in the officers' car, and closed the doors.

"Now, Jason Byne," said the little constable, "ye kin walk up to that sawdust grave ye jest helped to dig, an' jump in."

"What are you going to do?" croaked Byne.

"We're gonna plant ye in sawdust fer safe-keepin'," answered Opossum Bill. "Ye know the ole sayin', 'he thet digs a pit shall fall inter it' itself.' Yep. We're gonna do on to 'e as ye tried to do to Jed, an' as ye aimed to do to me. We're gonna bury ye in thet nice damp, smothery sawdust, an' stump it down good. Ain't nothin' as airtight as damp sawdust when it's tromped down good. 'Course if ye talk, an' talk fast, we'll let ye off. Whose deer was it to bury Bert Benner alive? An' what had ye agin him? Talk up, er git in thet hole!"

"It was Doremin's idea, to, to git rid of Benner that way," blurted Byne. "He was the venison bottlegger. He is a racketeer from down around Baltimore. He got fancy prices for all the venison he could supply to road houses and night clubs. He— he paid me and Jillson a percentage of his profits, for protection. Then when Benner got on to his racket he said he'd have to be bumped off."

"So the three of ye got the best of Bert, an' smothered 'im in thet borrowed grave?" said Opossum Bill.

"I had nothin' to do with it," protested Byne. "I only drove my car, and—"

"Jed," put in the little constable, "do ye reckon ye kin ricollect all ye jest heard, tomorrow, er mebbe next week?"

"I kin never fergit it," Opossum Billy, if I live as long as Methoosler."

"I reckon ye're a nat'ral born witness, Jed, but ye won't needa wait till ye're old as Methoosler to testify. I got a feelin' thet this'll turn out to be right speedy trial. An' now we'll be headin' fer home. I'm takin' no chances tryin' to drive this new-fangled car, an' I ain't turnin' ye loose, so ye kin drive it, Byne. We'll jest walk. Byne, ye kin start walkin'. Jed, foller 'im, an' tell 'im which way to go. An' if he tries to git away, let 'im have it."

"Both bars, Opossum Billy?"

"Yeah, Jed, both bars."

BACK at the little store, they found Trooper Shattuck doing nicely under Ma Giles' care. He had an ugly crease in his scalp where the bullet had struck, that had merely knocked him out.

"Jist my luck," wailed old Jed, with a baleful stare at the shackled Byne. "The cowardly, rock-solid copperhead! He never tried to git away." He patted Opossum Billy's gun. "Not one step outa the way did he take."

"Don't know as I blame him none," drawled Opossum Bill, rummaging in the apple tub. "I reckon it's better to show up down at the county seat guilty as Judas, than to show up lookin' like a dad-burned slave!"



hoss. One move outa ye, an'—"

A sly hand moved to a holstered pistol. But the move was not sly enough to fool Opossum Bill's keen, night-hunting eyes. The little constable's old .32 barked again. A heavy body pitched to the ground. To the other man Opossum Bill said: "Jest keep yer hands up. I ain't shootin' to scare. Thet's where yer pardner made his mistake. I had to let 'im have it straight to the heart."

"I got yer shotgun too, 'Fossum Billy, an' it's loaded with buckshot," old Jed spoke for the first time since his shadowy appearance on the scene. "If e say so, I'd be proud to give t'other 'n both bars!"

"No! No! Merciful heavens no! Where'd ye come from?" The hoarse, whimpering voice was Jason Byne's.

"He rix from the sawdust grave where ye buried 'im, to fight agin ye," said Opossum Bill. "An' now," he added, "ye kin put yer hands behind ye, while be ties 'em."

"I kin do better 'n tie 'em, 'Fossum Billy," said old Jed. "I figgered we might need 'em, so I brought erlong yer handcuffs."

When the handcuffs clicked on Byne's

BY COMPARISON

Continued From Page 15

back of Fidelia. "Pardon my intrusion. I didn't know you had company, Mrs. Crabb."

"No need of apologizin', Mr. Van Swain," said Min. "Fidelia was jest showin'—that are her say—goodness how stupid of me! I'd like yer to meet Miss Bunyon," laughed Min nervously. "Miss Bunyon will be har ter dinner too."

"How do you do," said Fidelia, her face still crimson.

"How do you do," said Mr. Van Swain, bowing stiffly.

"Just call me Fidelia. All of my gentlemen friends do," explained Miss Bunyon.

"Her trust of ber," thought Min Crabb. "What did she ever get a gentleman friend?"

"A lovely day to be out in the country, Miss Bunyon," said Mr. Van Swain, ignoring the lady's request.

"Yes, it is," agreed Fidelia. "You must have enjoyed the ride from Middleville this morning."

"Wonderful—beautiful!" said Mr. Van Swain enthusiastically. "My favorite ride, along the river all the way, mountains on both sides. Very fine country."

"It must be beautiful," said Fidelia. "I've heard others tell about it."

"Then you have never been over that road?" queried Mr. Van Swain. "Well now—"

"Dinner's ready! Come right away while things is hot!" called Min through the screen door to Hank and Em in the lawn swing in the side yard.

AS MIN had planned it, she had Mr. Van Swain sit on one side of the dinner table facing Emma and Fidelia on the other. Min was glad Fidelia wore her pink gazarbade. Fidelia did not look her best in pink. By comparison—Em, in her blue and green flowered voile, seemed real pretty.

The chicken dinner was well cooked and Min was pleased when Mr. Van Swain asked for a second helping of dumplings and later complimented her upon her delicious graham cracker pie and her culinary ability in general.

"It's nothing," said Min modestly. "Emma could do just as well, maybe even better, if I give her my recipes an' er few lessons. Emma's neat ar' particular 'bout her work too. B'lieve Em would make some man er right smart wife."

"There's no doubt about it," said Fidelia. "The man that gets Em will be lucky."

"Speaking of getting married," said Min, looking stily at Van Swain over the top of her glasses, "I see that their last new mail order catalog has two pages full o' nice engagement and weddin' rings. Putty reasonable, too, considerin' how nice they is. It would be er good time fer er man what war thinkin' 'bout getting married soon ter get one." Min stole another quick look at Van Swain. He was stuffing his mouth with pie. She turned to Em. "Em, I'll have ter show yer ther catalog arter dinner an' let yer pick out ther kind o' engagement ring and weddin' ring yer'd

want if yer war gettin' married soop. Ther's er beauty o' an engagement ring in thar for only \$98. Don't yer love ter look at diamond rings, Mr. Van Swain? Thar so bright an' glittin' like."

"Yes—hrrrrumph!—very interesting. I wonder if I could trouble you for another cup of coffee, Mrs. Crabb."

"No trouble at all," said Min, a bit discouraged over Van Swain's lack of interest in diamond rings. All through the meal, and throughout the afternoon in the shade of the maple tree in the yard, Min played matchmaker, patiently, skillfully. When their guests left an hour after supper, Min felt confident that it wouldn't be long now before she would be receiving a joyful message from Em.

The following Thursday morning Hank Crabb came from the post office and handed a blue envelope postmarked Middleville to Min. "I guess it's happened, Min," he said.

"What's happened?" asked Min.

"Of Van Swain has bori er diamond ring fer Em, I guess! Guess they must be engaged at last!"

"How do yer know? What makes yer think so, Hank Crabb?" shot back Min, all excited.

"Cause I held ther letter up ter ther light an' seen ther word diamond ring writ orther ther paper inside!"

"What right has you got snoopin' inter my pers'nal mail?" Min wanted to know, and tore the envelope open with trembling fingers and extracted the letter.

"Read it erloud, Min! Gosh! I'm most as excited 'bout Em hookin' in of Van Swain as you are. It may come in kind o' handy ter have him fer er brother-in—"

"Quiet, Hank Crabb!" ordered Min. "How kin I read this let— I can't believe it! Oh!—Oh!—Oh!" gasped Min as she perused Em's letter. "Thar must be some mistake!" Min felt her knees giving way beneath her and sank into the fiddleback rocker by the window.

"If that thar o' good fer nothin'—"

"What are it, Min? Read it ter me, will yer?" interrupted her inquisitive husband.

"Jest listen ter this here, Hank Crabb!" cried Min, suddenly sitting upright in the chair, her eyes blazing. "Em writes:—"

Dear sister Min:—
Van Swain bought a diamond engagement ring for Fidelia Bunyon Monday, we were married Tuesday, left for honeymoon trip in his new car today, Wednesday. The heck with him! We didn't have much in common anyway. More later.

As ever your sister,
Em.

"Phew! Phew!" whistled Hank Crabb. "I can't b'lieve it, Min. Why ther double crossin' o'— Why Em has Fidelia bori er mile fer looks. Why, by comparison—"

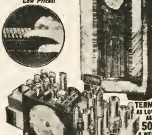
"Shut up!" snapped Min. "I never want ter hear them two words ergain," and she covered her face with her hands.

"But what has o' Van Swain an' Fidelia got in common, Min?" asked Hank Crabb. "Why they ain't no more suited ter—"

"What has they got in common?" sniveled Min Crabb. "Twenty—twenty-five thousand dollars! That's what they've got!" she blurted bitterly.

JUST TOUCH BUTTON— LATEST 20-TUBE MIDWEST TUNES ITSELF BY ELECTRIC MOTOR!

Only Midwest's Direct
From-Factory Price
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Sensational Features
Possible at Amazingly
Low Prices!



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Hit it today! Radio sensation!
Just touch an electric button
(on top of radio) . . . its
corresponding station will be
and the dial STOPS ITSELF
automatically on the station.
Zip . . . Zip . . . Zip . . . you bring
in 4 perfectly tuned stations in three seconds.

30 DAYS
FREE TRIAL
All this happens in 10 seconds with Midwest perfected
ELECTRIC TUNING! (1) You touch button—electric
motor makes dial revolve corresponding to station. (2)
Colorful Bull's Eye dials across dial and location itself behind
window. (3) Electric motor in its own motor of response.

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Why be content with an ordinary 10, 12 or 14 tube set,
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TUNING Midwest for the same money! It will surprise
and delight you with its brilliant world-wide reception on
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THE RIVER OF SKULLS

Continued from Page 15

ning as they do, there's no outlet from this side. After the blow we'll make sure."

"Eet ees far across there. We have to bury."

"But we've got the dogs to make it. Haven't we, Rough, old boy?" Alan replied confidently.

Alan went to the great dog sprawled on the wind-battered snow, and rubbed his ears as he looked into the slant eyes.

"You can take the team across this lake before that snow comes, can't you, Rough?"

Rough answered with a red laugh as his breath rose like smoke on the biting air.

With the Ungavas at a trot or a long lope and the boys riding the light sled which the dogs hardly felt, they started to cross the lake for the better camp ground of the opposite shore. For two hours the huskies steadily put the white miles behind them. Nearer and nearer approached the hills of the west shore but, as they traveled, the leaden sky in the north grew more sullen and the light from the smothered sun in the southern horizon slowly died.

They stopped to rest the dogs and the sober faces of the boys, framed in the long wolf hair rims of their hoods, turned anxiously to the north.

"Eet snow soon 'n' grow dark—ver' dark!" said Noel with a shake of the head. "We are long piece from de shore Alan."

"We're just a couple of plain fools," groaned Alan. "We're caught on a big lake in a snow storm, maybe a drifter, and the Lord knows when we'll reach the shore."

Swiftly the December night fell on the wanderers. Firmer and fiercer, like dust clouds, swept the whirling barrages of needle-pointed snow before the strengthening wind. On plodded the dog team into the black murk, muzzles and back coated with ice. Ahead of the dogs pushed two white wraiths of men, gasping as the wind sucked their breaths from their mouths.

For an hour Noel and Alan fought on, holding their direction by constantly quartering into the wind, as they had started, while, like sand-blasts, the edged torment of snow crystals flayed their faces buried in their hoods. Blinded by ice masking his head and eyes, white muzzle caked with blood from the shot-like scourge of fine snow, Rough followed at Alan's heels. But at length the gallant Ungavas, unable longer to face the stinging drive which tortured their noses like the lash of myriad whips, swung their backs to the white slant while they frantically pawed at their crusted muzzles to free their eyes.

Again they started, but Rough immediately swung the team down wind.

Once more Alan led off, quartering into the wind, but the dog swung away at right angles, yelping into his master's face.

"What's the matter with the dogs?" he shouted to Noel. "They won't face it! We've got to cut into the wind to reach the shore!"

Again they moved forward but had not traveled far when Alan sensed that his team was not behind him. Seizing Noel by the shoulder, with his hood close to the other's, he shouted: "The dogs! We've lost the dogs!"

Turning back the two men circled blindly, hoping against hope that the dogs with their precious food and sleeping bags were not wandering over the lake ice. In vain Alan called Rough, but the roar of the north swallowed his voice.

"Don't go too far!" he shouted into Noel's ear. "If we stay where we are, they may scent us from down wind."



As they huddled, backs to the drive, they dropped their mittens on their thighs, thrust their numbed hands beneath their inner coats and shirts and in under their armpits until the blood again reached their fingers. Then they wiped the ice from their fast freezing faces. Whenever the wind eased, they shouted together, hoping that the dogs would somehow hear them. But in their hearts there was little hope. They were lost on the ice of a great lake in a Labrador "drifter." Soon the withering cold would numb them until all feeling was gone—all desire to fight on to the shore that lay somewhere through the murk. Soon, like their dogs, they would stiffen in the drifts while the pitiless, white slant drove over them.

But love of life was strong and Alan battled with the despair that dulled his senses in the searing cold. He thought of Berthe and his homecoming to Fort George with a fortune on his sled. Then the two who depended on him, at the cabin on the Talking seemed to call to him. He heard Heather's voice. "Fight, Alan! Fight! Don't give up! Come back to us!"

In a lull in the shrieking wind a faint sound reached the dulled ears of

the freezing man huddled beside his silent friend. Again, from the blackness beyond, above the drumming of the wind, came a faint wail.

"Goodby, Rough! Goodby!" muttered the numbed Alan, already far on the way to the white sleep.

But the snow-crusted figure beside him stirred.

"Rough, de dog—I hear dem, Alan! Wake up! Wake up, Alan! De team got our scent—down win!"

Slowly Alan fought his way back from the frontiers of the freezing sleep as Noel pounded him and shouted that the team was near. At last, the two numbed men drove the blood back into each other's veins, shouting together to the dogs whose faint howls reached their ears through breaks in the wind.

Then, moving down wind, Alan heard a weak, despairing wail from the impenetrable murk directly ahead. Running forward he stumbled into four white wraiths huddled behind the drifted sled.

"Rough!"

A massive head, crusted with snow, lifted. A white muzzle, icicles hanging from frozen flews, groped for the master's face. Wiping the ice from the sealed eyes of his dog, Alan called:

"Up, boy! Marche, Rough! We're going for the shore!"

Clearing the whimpering puppies' eyes, the boys straightened the tangled harness, and beat the ice from the dogs' coats as they encouraged them. Then Alan called into Rough's ear:

"We've got to make the shore, Rough! I give up! I'm lost! You're going to lead us now! Find the shore, boy! Marche!"

With a yelp the dog straightened in his harness. Nose close to ice the Ungava again started down wind.

"He'll tak us up de lake—not to de shore!" shouted Noel, in protest.

"Give him his head!" was Alan's grim reply.

With a yelp the husky threw himself into his collar and started the team. On they plunged into the maelstrom of whirling snow until Rough suddenly leaped in his traces and started forward at a lope, followed by the yelping puppies.

"De spruce! I see de spruce!"

Following the dogs up over the lifted and broken shore ice, the half delirious men stumbled through alders and on into the black spruce of the west shore. There Alan threw himself beside his dog and circling the white mane shouted: "You did it, you old devil! God bless your bones, you took us ashore! You knew the wind had shifted and we didn't!"

"Ah-hah!" cried Noel. "De win' she shif' and we follow de shif' but dat Rough he know bettair and travel down win!"

Back into the wind-break of black spruce they plunged and with numbed hands scooped out a snowhole with their shoes and started a fire with the dry

and the swift winking eye she had hidden from Alan.

CHAPTER XVIII

ITS honey-combed ice flooded with pools of water, and entirely open in wide areas, from which rose clouds of vapor, the great lake reached, under the June sun, to the hills dim on the eastern horizon. For days the big Peterboro had waited while three men and a girl watched its frozen shell soften and break up. Already red-throated loons skittered and dived, calling in shrill, staccato shrieks or again wailing like a child, from the open water, while querulous Glaucous gulls, Arctic tern and ravens circled high in the air, impatient for the opening of the lake.

"A few more days and we'll be able to start for the cache at the outlet," observed Alan, as he and McCord removed the gray kokomesh and silvery white-fish from their gill-net and returned to the hungry dogs who stood, breast-deep, in the icy water clamoring to be fed.

"Probably the ice at the foot of the lake is out by now," replied McCord, "and a good south wind will start these big rats up here. I wonder how close behind us McQueen is."

"Not far, I'll bet. But he'll never get the two Conjuror River Indians to go down the river with him. We'll only have four to handle when the time comes. What are we going to do—let him dog us clear to the River of Skulls or—?"

"What d'you say?" interrupted the big man in the other end of the canoe.

"I say I don't want to slave all summer and then fight for our dust. I'd rather fight now!" Suddenly Alan's gray eyes softened, as he added: "But then, there's Heather."

"Yes, there's Heather. Their game is to trail us, then wipe us out to get that gold, and what would become of her?"

"I've been thinking of her. I didn't want her to come. Now she's with us, I've turned Indian."

"You mean?" The bold eyes glittered beneath the livid scar on McCord's forehead.

"I mean when I think of Heather in their hands, I forget all law. It's a finish fight, John, and no quarter. They're going to make it, their lives or ours!"

McCord's big knuckled hands closed convulsively on his paddle. "A finish fight and no quarter, partner!" he repeated, huskily. "All law's off on the Koksoak! I know McQueen. He'd wipe us out without a qualm. Then they'd murder Heather, later, before they reached the coast—leave no witnesses, no evidence against them. And they'd have our gold."

"There's another thing, John—the Naskapi. Drummond got by without meeting them. But we're bound to run into them somewhere on the Koksoak. We're passing through their country. We'll need luck when we do."

The giant nodded. "Let's hope that

McQueen meets up with them first."

At last the south wind and the high June sun cleared the lake of its rotting raft-ice and the big Peterboro, in which they were to make the voyage, reached the hidden cache at the outlets. There the precious bags of flour, beans, and pemmican which they were to leave, with the extra canoe, were wrapped in tarpaulin and stored on the high platform. While the freshest water following the ice thundered down the three outlets into the flat valley to the north, the supplies for the summer were carefully overhauled and packed in bags. Spruce setting poles were cut and shod with irons McCord had brought from Rupert. Every ounce of superfluous equipment was stored on the cache, for they could not guess what long portages awaited them on this unknown river that flowed hundreds of miles north to the sea; what churning white-water, around which they would have to pack canoe and supplies. Only the Naskapi

For an hour, while Rough and the puppies ran snowshoe rabbits in the scrub below them, the two men watched the unruffled miles of water reaching to the south, broken only by the antics of red-throated loons. Later a wedge-shaped ripple, like an ever widening spear-head, thrust out from the wooded shore toward a large island. Two caribou, on a voyage of discovery, were making the crossing. With their heads wound with nesting and sitting in the smoke of the smudge, the boys fought the vicious thrusts of the mosquitoes as they watched the lake. At last, miles to the south, Alan's glasses picked up something of interest.

"What you see?" demanded Noel.

He handed the binoculars to Noel and waited for the Indian's verdict.

"Ah-hah!" grunted Noel. "Camp smoke!"

"Smoke hanging over that spruce point all right but whose smoke? McQueen's or the Naskapi's?"

"De Naskapi hunt deer on de barren. Dates McQueen."

Back at camp McCord listened to the news.

"Right on our heels, like wolves after deer, eh! Well, they won't find much deer in us!"

But Heather sat gazing into the fire, her brown face grave with foreboding. Noel, too, was silent as he worked on a paddle with his draw-knife, for the tales he had heard since childhood of the spirit-haunted rivers and the fierce nomads who roamed the interior following the caribou herds harassed him.

Shortly after daylight, the Peterboro ailed into the slant of the first drop of the outlet on its long voyage north. Fast shores rimmed with red willows and alders, behind which the young leaves of the aspen shivered in the breeze, apple-green against the olive of the spruce, they rode the strong water. Farther on, past bold, boulder-strewn shores and through lake expansions, they traveled beyond the sunset and into the afterglow.

In the morning, when they raised their net, Alan took from among the red-bellied square-tails and the white-fish, a graceful, dark-backed, silvery fish and held it up for John's inspection.

"It must be a winninish, John, as sure as you're born! No sea salmon can get up here above all these falls and it's too early, anyway. We don't have these fellows on the coast—only the Hearn's salmon, with red spots, in the Bay. This proves we're on Koksoak water."

"Land-locked salmon, boy! I've caught them often in Quebec! Notice that line of black spots along the side! By glory, I'm going to have some fun, nights on this river, for I've got a rod and some flies—flies, lad! My Scotch blood wouldn't let me come without them."

To Alan's amusement McCord produced from a stout skin case, a jointed steel rod, a reel with oiled silk line and a small leader and fly-book.

Good river men though they were, the



and the caribou in their migrations had looked upon the upper Koksoak.

The water dropped rapidly and Alan and Noel returned one night from an inspection of central outlet, which they were to follow, with the news that the river was now passable for a canoe. Following their daily custom, when the boys had eaten, they climbed to the nearest high ground to sweep the lake with their glasses.

Dipping behind the ridges the sun rimmed the western tundra with fire. Before them, like a burnished floor, the great lake reached mile upon mile without a ripple until it vanished in haze. High in the air a golden eagle hung, motionless.

Building a moss smudge fire, for the mosquitoes were merciless, the boys waited for the sunset. When the sun had been swallowed by the tundra, the sky slowly flushed with rose, which was caught and held in the limitless mirror of the lake. Sky and water lay in the spell of the long northern twilight.

The shimmer of the sun on the water had ceased and Alan began to sweep the wide expanse to the south with the binoculars. Somewhere behind them were McQueen and Slade with their halfbreeds; Alan was curious to know how far.

another sound. It was a baby's cry, lusty, outraged, insistent.

"Panchito!"

Overcome with curiosity Lily and Andrew followed their captor into the hut. A hastily lighted candle disclosed a room with furniture as bizarre and sumptuous as El Angel's own trappings, but the handit strode through it in haste and led them to smaller room where a bulging hammock swung from the ceiling. A fringe of toes and fingers waved in protest from its edge. The yelling became more eloquent.

El Angel flung his sombrero in a corner, rushed to the hammock and lifted out the infant whose crying stopped at once on a high note. "Ah, que niño," cried the handit hugging the baby against the silver embroidery of his jacket, showering kisses on the top of its head. Then he frowned.

"Lola!"

There was no answer.

"Dios mio! My wife has left me." The handit turned to Andrew. "Women are the devil."

Andrew murmured condolences but the Mexican cut him off impatiently. "It's not my wife I'm worrying about, but Panchito. He's starving!"

"I think," offered Lily, "I'd better go out to the kitchen and see what I can find."

"There's a pot of beans on a charcoal grate out here," she reported presently, "but they're cold and the fire's out. Anyway I wouldn't feed them to him. Ask him if they have a cow."

"No cow," Andrew replied. "He says they had one once but nobody could milk her, so they had a barbecue."

"That's a help. Wait, let me look at these rumples Groucher's bringing in from the diner. Anchovy pasta, head of lettuce, tomato ketchup, coffee—not a thing for a baby, Mr. Angel. Why didn't you steal a can of milk?"

El Angel looked at her helplessly. Gone was his swagger, his assurance, his swashbuckling bluster. He was no knave now, merely a worried father pacing the floor with a screaming baby.

"Here, give him to me," Lily said and El Angel handed him over with relief. "Hello, little handit! It's awful to be on a diet, isn't it?"

ANDREW'S heart turned over with sharp, sweet pain at the look of glory on the girl's face but Panchito did not share his emotion and only cried the harder.

"Hey, there, you little outlaw," cautioned Lily, shifting his position. "You're going to spit something in a minute if you don't stop. We can't think in all this racket. Andrew, ask the man for Pete's sake if he can't think of something on the place that gives milk. Didn't the mother have an understudy?"

"No animals on the place but burros, he says."

"Well, we'll have to milk a burro then. Don't tell me you can't milk!"

"Oh, yes, I can milk all right. Cows. But—"

Afterward, thinking back

over the three fantastic days that followed, Andrew remembered them with a cramp in the fingers of his right hand. For once Panchito had a good meal under his belt there was no satisfying him, and the one thing El Angel would not stand was to hear his baby cry. His train and his son, those two things El Angel loved with extravagance and adoration. The first cheep from the hammock and El Angel would call,

"Senor! Senor!"

And whether it happened to be noon or midnight or 4:30 of a chilly morning Andrew must haul out and milk Pepita. If he could not find Pepita, he milked Inez. If Inez grew stubborn, there always remained Alicia. There was no getting out of it. Panchito must be fed.

But there were other things Andrew remembered too. The happiness Lily could not keep out of her voice as she sang and clattered about in the smoky kitchen, experimenting with Mexican pots and pans. Once she said,

"I wish you'd tell the boss next time he goes off on a raid to bring me a plain old-fashioned skillet and a can-opener if he expects me to cook for him."

But she cooked, nevertheless, with madcap good will, if not always with success, and their meals were hilarious. Even Pedro smiled sometimes. That is, he smiled at Lily and there was idolatry in his eyes. But he treated her with respect. El Angel treated her with respect. And Andrew, battling within himself, treated her with respect too.

Only Panchito had his way with her. He held out golden-brown dimpled arms to her when he felt like it. He wept when she left the room. He snuggled against her breast and allowed her to sing him to sleep.

But with the return of Ysidro, all of this had to end. They had almost forgotten Ysidro. And when he rode wearily into camp on the evening of the third day with a note and a little canvas bag of money for El Angel, they welcomed him a little coolly. They had not expected him so soon.

El Angel took the money, read the note and tossed it to Andrew.

"Esteemed Senor," Evalyn had written

in her precise hand. "I am sending the 15,000 pesos (\$15,000) for the safe return of my fiancé, Mr. Andrew Craig. Please release him at once. I regret that it is impossible for me to raise the sum for the young lady."

THERE was more, but the lines blurred before Andrew's eyes and he crushed the paper in his fist and threw it to the floor.

"By gosh!" he exclaimed. "I didn't know anybody in the world could be so deliberately cruel." And without even looking at Lily he went outside.

El Angel shrugged. "I was not going to let her go anyway," he said to no one in particular. "Panchito needs her." Then he turned to Lily and asked her humbly, in pantomime, if she would mind giving Ysidro some supper.

"I might as well," she said drily. "Come on Paul Revere. I'll warn over the beans."

Outside the moonlight was the same as it had been on the other nights. There came into the stillness of the canyon two muffled shots from the direction of the house. Lily screamed. Andrew wasted no time but ran at once, pushing the door open with hands gone to ice.

"Lily! Lily! Where are you?"

He found them all in the kitchen. Pedro lying in a smear of blood on the floor, El Angel covering Ysidro with a gun, Lily withdrawn into a corner of the room.

"What happened?"

"These two swine," muttered El Angel angrily, "fishing over the senorita! Here, take this gun. Hold it in Ysidro's face while I look at Pedro's wounds."

El Angel knelt on the floor, began to examine Pedro.

"Ask the senorita if she will be so good as to get some clean rags and a bowl of water. Gracias! And you, Ysidro, he went on in quiet fury, "you always cause trouble. For three days we live in peace here, and then you arrive and there is a fight. You are always in trouble over a woman. Dios mio! Men are the devil!"

He began binding up Pedro's wounds expertly. "I can't have my men shooting each other up, especially you two. You are my best men. She will have to one solution. She will have to marry one or the other of you. Myself, I am through with marriage. Besides, Lola might come back. Senor Craig, please explain to her. She will have to make a choice."

Andrew interpreted for her with reluctance, and she looked with revulsion first at Pedro, groaning on the floor, then at Ysidro, svelte, smug, reptilian.

"Pardon a suggestion," said Andrew quietly, "but I am the young lady's countryman, you know. Does it not seem more logical to you that she should marry me?"

"But, senor, you forget! You are leaving tomorrow."

"I prefer to stay."

"Bien! It is all settled then," exclaimed El Angel, "You will



flow of books, magazines, candy, bottles of orange juice, even a gallon of ice cream.

The corridor outside Karen's cell was filled with flowers. Some of them Karen asked the matron to send on over to Bellevue Hospital, Telegrams, telephone calls defused the place until the deputies and turnkey were beside themselves. Jail routine came to an abrupt and complete stop.

As for the girls on Karen's corridor, they were having the time of their lives. Thelma and Blanche, who with Violet completed the roster of Karen's cellmates, were standoffish at first, but they capitulated completely after Karen shared with them the delicious chicken dinner.

They openly worshipped at Karen's feet. To them she was the most glamorous, wonderful person they had ever known, like something out of a story book.

"Gee, you've only been here 24 hours, and it seems like a month to me!"

Blanche remarked the next afternoon, her mouth full of crab meat salad.

Karen still wore the blue-checked gingham, but her slender legs were in silk hose, and she had on her own brown leather pumps.

"I've never had so much company in my life since you've got here," Blanche went on. "Just today three different guys have been up here to see me."

"Who were they?"

"Darned if I know. They just came to see me. Said they were interested in my case. And I explained everything to them."

"Did they ask about me too?"

Karen suddenly was suspicious. "Sure! Everybody asks about you. But I told them I wouldn't tell them anything, just as you told me too. They said they understood you were not being nice to us, and I said you were the best cellmate anybody ever had."

"What else did they ask you?"

"Nothing, only I told them all the swell things we'd had to eat, and that your step-ins cost \$20."

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" Karen was torn between laughter and tears. She had visions of what he result would be. "Eat the rest of that salad, Blanche," Karen said kindly. She couldn't scold such an adoring friend.

Violet, sensing something was wrong, questioned Karen.

"It's nothing, Violet, really. I'm just trying to get my courage up, for my lawyer will be along any time now, and my father will dock tomorrow morning."

"You'll catch it."

"That's a mild statement," Karen shrugged.

Restless, Karen paced about the small corridor before her cell. She was not sorry, no indeed. But she could not forget, awaking in the late night and hearing the sound of many people breathing heavily, asleep, locked up in the dark.

There was something terrible about it. She shuddered. All this seemed so futile. Here was Violet, and Thelma, and Blanche, victims of circumstances. It seemed that the world ought to manage things better!

So it was with a heavy heart she went to meet Lawton. Farrington was not with him.

"He'll come later," he said in reply to her inquiring glance. "That is, if you're not out of here by night. You will be if I have anything to say about it."

"What about Mother?" Karen tried to hide her uneasiness.

Lawton saw his advantage and pulled a long face. "She's under a doctor's care."

"Really! Oh, Jim, what's wrong?"

"You should ask!"

"You mean all this has so upset her?"

"What did you expect? Then, too, she's been frantic with all the canceling of contracts and everything. She feels it is unfair to deprive all the peo-

"I think he feels everybody has been making a fiasco of the whole thing," and Lawton unfolded the afternoon paper. "I don't mean to criticize you, Karen. But this is pretty bad. I don't know what your mother will say."

Karen looked. There was the story of the \$20 step-ins, the fried chicken. Glaring headlines, Karen in bathing suit, Karen playing tennis, and finally Karen handing over her engagement ring to the property keeper in jail.

"Is it true?"

"Which?" Karen refused to allow Lawton to see her agitation.

Lawton paced about the little office of the matron: "What am I going to tell Judge Stoddard?"

"What do you mean? Did he send you here?"

"He sent for me, called me at my office. I came down to Mott Street to see him, and he told me he'd let you out if you wished."

"In other words, if I cry, 'I give up,' he'll be satisfied?"

"He means nothing of the sort. Why put this thing on a personal basis? Like all of us, he is sick of all this publicity."

Karen laughed: "So the handsome judge can't 'take it' now that things are getting a little uncomfortable. You go back to him and take him a message from me. Tell him that she sentenced me to five days, and five days I am going to serve. And you might also tell him that some day I'm going to get even with him for all this, if it's the last thing I ever do."

Lawton shrugged his shoulders. He washed his hands of the whole thing. "I'll meet your father in the morning. Do you want him to come down here to see you?"

"Certainly not. Probably he wouldn't anyway! But if you hear anything of Jay, let me know. I get worried about him."

Wish he wouldn't drink so much."

Lawton's face was a blank.

"He's a darling really, Jim. He's the best brother anybody ever had. You don't know him as I do."

Just as Lawton was ready to leave, Ping arrived with books and magazines and a decidedly worried expression. "I really shouldn't be here," he said. "Karen, get your hat, we're leaving."

"She won't go," Lawton explained lamely.

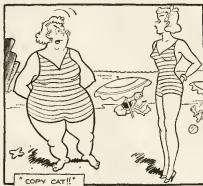
"Listen, Karen, we've all been working on Stoddard, and now when we've finally got him in the mood to let you out, what do you do?"

"I just say I want nothing of that Stoddard person, and I stay right here."

"You're a nice one. You leave me to cope with not only my own mother, but yours as well. In some queer way, they both hold me responsible for this. They claim because I know Stoddard I should get you out."

"Don't worry, Ping. When this is over, you and I will tell them all where to head in at and we'll elope to China or something."

"Now, Karen, I've told you before I



ple who were depending on your party for jobs."

"Then go ahead and have the party without me."

"You're talking like a child."

"I told you before we'd have it Tuesday when I get out."

"It is already canceled, Karen."

Karen hesitated. "Is Jay angry at me?"

"We haven't seen him. I was hoping you'd heard from him. That's one reason I came. Your mother is pretty worried about him too!"

"He's just A. W. O. L. again?"

"I guess that's what you'd call it."

"What a family I have! Jay's missing. Marle's divorcing her husband, I'm in jail, Mother's ill and Dad on the Normandie just about to have apoplexy, poor darling. You'll meet him tomorrow morning?"

"Karen, you've caused everybody enough trouble. I can get you out tonight. I just came from Judge Stoddard. He said it was all right with him if it was with you."

"What did he mean by that? Have I got to apologize to him?"

promised your father we'd stay here and be married next June. I gave my solemn word—"

"Don't be thresome. Maybe now dad will be glad to get rid of me! What did you bring me? What, no diamond bracelet?" Karen wrinkled her nose at Ping, and in between appearances of Miss Kilroy he managed to kiss her on the top of her head.

Karen went back to her cell. There were more telegrams, most of them rather dreary attempts at humor. She was restless.

It would soon be time for supper. Another day chalked off. Only two more nights and then she would be away from this place. The odor of antiseptic which permeated the place now seemed to Karen a part of herself.

But the girls were in the best of spirits. Karen had already ordered a large supper for herself and cell-mates. They were eagerly waiting for the food to arrive. When it came, Violet spread out clean paper on the metal table and they all helped set out the food. When they sat down together, eating everything with spoons, the only table utensil allowed them, they laughed a great deal.

It was while Violet was in the midst of an amusing story of her adventure in Agua Caliente that Miss Kilroy opened the door and let another girl into the corridor where they were eating.

"Here's a new girl. Her cell is the one across from Violet's," Miss Kilroy had said as she hurried away. The girl, not any older than Karen, walked over to the cell assigned to her without comment. She lay down on the cot and covered her eyes.

"Don't you want some coffee? It's swell. Come on, there's lots of food here." Blanche tried to urge the newcomer to join them. But she made her refusals in monosyllables.

Another batch of telegrams came for Karen. The girls helped her to open them and they read them aloud as they drank their coffee.

"Gee, here's one signed 'Marian Mance,' from Hollywood! It's phony, isn't it?" Blanche asked.

"No, I know Marian; have met her several times when I've been on the coast."

Suddenly the new girl got off her cot, came outside and stood before them, where they sat on the bench near the table.

"I suppose you're Karen Mallory." The girl's eyes glittered, and her hands were shaking. Suddenly Karen was afraid and drew near to Violet.

"So you're afraid? I am not going to hurt you. I am going to tell you the truth." Her voice rose hysterically. "You've come in here and made this jail out a joke. You've got caviar and ice cream and roses, and God knows what around here."

Tears welled in her eyes as she screamed: "Let me tell you something. I'm in this jail and it is no joke to me. I'm going to be tried for robbery, armed. I didn't do it, but that's what I'm going to be tried for, so it doesn't make any difference."

"I'm going away for a long stretch

probably, if I'm lucky! There was a cop killed in the hold-up. That's murder, you may have heard."

"I may even burn for it! And you with your silly, empty face stand around here and get telegrams and flowers!"

The girl stopped as suddenly as she had begun. For a moment the four girls were rooted where they sat. Then Karen stood up. She put her hand on the girl's arm.

"I'm sorry, we didn't know." The girl tried to pull away, but Karen would not allow that. "Please. Tell us your name." Karen's voice was kind.

"Ansonia March."

Then they knew. There had been long stories in the newspapers. She was accused of driving an automobile in a bank robbery in which one of the guards was killed.

"Gee, I guess I just went nuts," Ansonia said at last when her sobbing had ceased.

Karen nodded. "You see, everybody has their troubles. But it does seem you have more than your share."

And Ansonia smiled for the first time in many days.

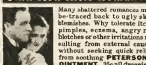
CHAPTER IV

KAREN's father, R. Jason Mallory, III, arrived in New York on Monday on what he had expected would be the morning of his daughter's twenty-first birthday ball. And the skies had not

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fallen, although Karen half expected some dire catastrophe to happen.

"Things are looking up," she announced to Lawton when he came to see her that last day. "Jay sent me a wire—from Miami this morning. He just arrived there. You tell me mother's better. I get out of jail tomorrow—things may not be so bad after all."

"You didn't have to try to explain this whole mess to your father, young lady. I did."

"I know. By the way, Jim, there's a girl in here. I want to hire an attorney for her. Will you get one?"

"Might be a good idea to get out yourself first," he retorted.

Ping dropped in later in the day, promised her the best party a girl ever had for her "coming out."

But Karen suddenly felt a sadness when supertime came and the girls had their last meal together.

"I don't think I'll be able to eat," said Blanche. But she did, and Karen persuaded Ansonia March to eat the first decent meal she'd had since she was arrested.

"You know, you're swell!" said Thelma, her mouth full of chocolate cake. "Gee, I thought you'd be terrible, but you're kinder than almost anybody I know."

"I'm not often accused of that."

That last night Karen could not sleep. She longed desperately for fresh air, and she wanted so dreadfully to help the four girls she was leaving behind. Violet, she felt, could manage. But poor Ansonia! She must do something about her! And Thelma, who had a year to serve. Breakfast was a sad affair; even Blanche could not eat with usual gusto.

"Now cheer up, gang. There is one thing I've arranged. Tonight I'm going out celebrating. And in here you're to have your dinner from the hotel just the same as though I were with you. Order anything you like, no matter what it costs. Then pretend I'm here with you. "I'll send you each a blanket like the one I'm leaving for Blanche," Karen continued. It seemed easier going, if she could promise to send them something.

Ping came for her at 2 o'clock. "We might just as well make a run for it," Karen told Ping. So they did, straight to his waiting car. The chauffeur turned toward Fifth Avenue. Then it would be easy to lose any car that followed.

Karen's family, when they were in town, lived in one of the last of the old sandstone and marble pillared houses on Fifth Avenue, across from Central Park. "The mausoleum," Jay always called it, and it was to "the mausoleum" they were headed.

"Cocktails at

Gail's and from there, some place for dinner. And I know a good late spot. That's a surprise," said Ping.

"I may be in difficulties with father. He may insist I stay in. He's been so nice about all this that I'll have to do what he wants," Karen said.

"Sure, but we can sneak out and join the crowd later; besides, I think I'm invited for dinner. Your mother said something about it."

"Then everything will be all right," Karen lifted her head. "Roll down the window, Ping. Heavens, just to be in the air again! Now wait a minute. I've an errand I want to do, darling."

"We've got to get on home."

"Now be a pet! Just wait for me. I'll dash in here, and get it over with in a minute."

Karen ran into a well-known Fifth Avenue shop—she was gone a half hour while Ping fumed and fussed and stormed. When she came back she was beaming. "I had to get some things to send to the girls in jail."

"You sound as though it were a sorority. I'm getting a little fed up with this jail business, Karen."

"Be sweet to me, Ping. Remember I haven't been out long, and I'm rather high-strung—" Her eyes were laughing at him.

"How could anybody be angry with you, Karen?" he demanded as he kissed her right there in the middle of Fifth Avenue as their car stopped for a red light.

"You're sweet!" Ping told Karen as they neared the "mausoleum." "But you're going to be hard to manage. I wonder if I'm capable of that job." He held her hand as he talked.

"Don't try to manage me, Ping."

He shook his head. "You wouldn't like that, either."

The car stopped at the side drive. Karen was back home. Together they ran up the steps into the hall.

Karen's father was standing there, much to her surprise, for she hardly expected him until dinner.

"Dad! I'm so glad to see you!"

He drew back. Karen's arms fell to



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